HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT

The Jesuit Educational Center for Human Development

HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT

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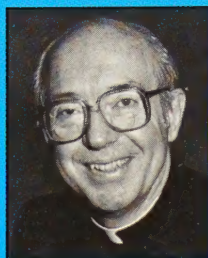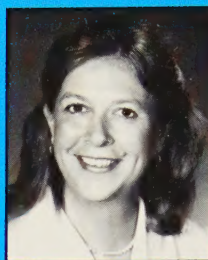
Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate to the Executive Editor, Linda Amadeo, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, The Institute of Living, 400 Washington St., Hartford, CT 06106. Copy should be typewritten double-spaced on 8½ × 11 inch white paper, 70 characters per line and 28 lines per page. Manuscripts are received with the understanding that they have not been previously published and are not currently under consideration elsewhere. Feature articles should be limited to 4,500 words (15 pages) with no more than 6 recommended readings; filler items of between 500 and 1,000 words will be considered. All accepted material is subject to editing.

Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide names of author(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

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EDITOR'S PAGE

ANGELS AT THE STOP & SHOP

Today's supermarket sells everything. We go there expecting to find a grocery, meat market, pharmacy, bakery, and even a book and magazine store, all under one roof. But what I never anticipated finding—but nevertheless did, at the neighborhood Stop & Shop, just a few weeks before Christmas—was a large and prominently displayed array of books and calendars featuring exclusively the subject of angels. None of them about the Infant Jesus, his Blessed Mother, or Saint Joseph. None devoted to the gloriously privileged experience of the Bethlehem shepherds or the Magi. Only angels, and no other topic on those spotlighted shelves. The clerk at the checkout counter said the angel books and calendars were selling briskly. Who would not walk away, as I did, wondering *why angels?* Why the new popularity of these spirits in the year 1992?

I made a special trip back to the Stop & Shop to find out what these books had to say about the messengers God sent to fill the night of Jesus' birth with song. Some offered full-color reproductions of impressions of angels painted by some of the world's most gifted artists. Some compiled the sayings and passages about angels written by evangelists, poets, and mystics down through the centuries. Other books traced the understanding and study of angels in different cultures. They discussed the insights of theologians, along with the thoughts of such angel-watchers as Dante, Goethe, Blake, Dostoyevski, and Swedenborg. One of the books even offered "a practical guide to working with the messengers of heaven to empower and enrich your life"; it included exercises, meditations, and visu-alizations designed to enable one to talk with angels and obtain their guidance and support. Several books contained a collection of reports on personal encounters with angels that had brought healing, rescue, warning, or comfort. But the question remains: Why the popularity of angels and the proliferation of writings about them now? They must be offering something that we supermarket shoppers are looking for. What could it be?

At a time when so many are unemployed and everyone is worried about the economy, do we long for angels to announce some hopeful "news of great joy . . . to be shared by the whole people"?

With crime and violence so commonplace on our city streets, do we yearn for angels to calm us once again by saying "Do not be afraid," as they did at Bethlehem?

As we send the young people we love into a frightening world plagued with AIDS, drug abuse, and sexual exploitation, do we hope for the same sort of reassurance Tobit gave his worried wife when their son Tobias was departing: "All will be well with our child. . . . A good angel will go with him; he will have a good journey and come back to us well and happy"?

Or is the growing presence of the poor and the voiceless in our land—those who are most distressed about housing, medical care, and human dignity—reminding us to search spiritually for the caring angels Cardinal Newman described as "our fellow-servants and our fellow-workers," who "carefully watch over and defend even the humblest of us"?

Perhaps psychological stress has become so prevalent in our everyday lives, taking such a heavy emotional and physical toll, that we long to regain contact with the angels, who proclaimed and brought peace—the antidote to stress—to the hearts of those who heard their voices on the first "silent night."

Even more likely, I think, is that many people who have difficulty believing that God exists and lovingly cares for them are returning to their childhood faith in the angels, who Jesus said "guard you in all your ways"—thus taking a step toward enlivening their weakened hope and trust in God.

One final possible explanation of the soaring interest in angels is that in these unspeakably beautiful models of spirituality we see individuals who love and praise, not for the sake of what they can get from the One they love and adore, but purely for the sake of loving Him—in heaven now, just as they did at Bethlehem. In their kind of love and devotion to God we catch a glimpse of what our own blissful eternity will include: a focus of all our love upon God and a simultaneous cherishing of all the persons near and dear to us. That's the life of our protecting, instructing, encouraging, and guiding angels now. They bless every moment of our days and nights while they gaze, as Mary and Joseph did, upon the infinitely lovable face of the Living God.

May the angels sing the joyful message of Christmas to the hearts of all our readers during this holy season and all through the new year ahead.

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.
Editor-in-Chief

Symptoms That Identify the Workaholic

Workaholics usually tell people that they enjoy their work, but they still experience a great deal of stress in their lives. And stress costs American industry more than $150 billion annually in absenteeism, reduced productivity, worker's compensation and health insurance claims, and other medical expenses.

According to research by Lawrence Murphy and Theodore Schoenborn, described in *Corporate Health*, stress-related factors are responsible for between 75 and 90 percent of visits to primary-care physicians, for as much as 85 percent of industrial accidents, and for more than 60 percent of long-term employee disability cases involving psychological or psychosomatic problems.

Jonathan Smith, Ph.D., and Robert Posen, Ph.D., both of the Institute for Stress Management, have found that workaholics generally demonstrate four distinct behavioral symptoms. The first is self-induced time pressure. The workaholic feels that there is never enough time to get his or her work done, and as a result sets up pressing deadlines for everything. Some individuals relish the excitement of racing against the clock and take pride in being able to work well "under fire," but to preserve their health and sense of well-being they ought to learn effective time-management and deadline-setting strategies.

The second symptom of workaholism is driven behavior. Workaholics have a compulsive need to be always on the go. They consider any "down time" to be wasted time. They do not focus on long-term goals; instead they concentrate on just working hard on *something*, whether or not it turns out to be productive. They also tend to undervalue the importance of relaxing leisure-time activities at work and at home. Workaholics fail to realize that peak efficiency is possible only with thorough and effective rest.

The Atlas Syndrome is the third symptom that characterizes workaholics. They feel as though they are carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders. Usually feeling responsible for everything around them, these people rarely delegate authority or ask others for help. They regard such dependency as a sign of weakness. Workaholics tend to be overly serious, laugh rarely, smile infrequently, and have an all-work-and-no-play attitude. They experience a great deal of fatigue and loneliness.

The final trait of workaholics is undue striving for achievement. The *Executive Fitness* newsletter explains, "While those who work hard to realize their potential and dreams are more likely to make them reality, achievement-striving can be a problem when, coupled with other workaholic behaviors, it becomes *everything*. In the unlikely event that the all-achieving workaholics make it to the top of the company ladder, they may sadly learn that their alienation of colleagues results in no one being there to hold it steady for them."

Health Forum for Women Religious

Mary Jean Ryan, F.S.M.

Most articles that deal with issues of concern to women religious focus on aspects of our vocation that we have in common—community life, prayer, a commitment to serving others. There is another issue, though, that requires our attention because it deals with an important difference among us. It is a difference that may affect the health and well-being of thousands of Sisters.

The SSM Health Care System and our sponsor, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, became aware of this concern about eight years ago. As members of a religious congregation whose mission is health care, we live and work in environments in which medical and nursing care is readily available and the awareness of good health measures and preventive care is high.

In an informal survey conducted in 1985, we found that such awareness is not prevalent among women religious who serve in other apostolates. Hundreds of teaching Sisters in the St. Louis (Missouri) metropolitan area proved to be "out of the loop" in terms of preventive health care. The survey revealed a precarious lack of regular physical examinations, mammograms, education in breast self-examination, and screenings for various health conditions.

Some of the Sisters surveyed were not aware of the simple tests that are available. Some were reticent about discussing sensitive health concerns with male doctors. Some were reluctant to use tightly budgeted community funds to pay for visits to the doctor. Some did not feel worthy of spending money on their personal health if they were not ill. The low wages traditionally paid to religious, coupled with the lack of insurance coverage for preventive medical care, reinforced the Sisters' attitudes.

We talked about this situation with some women leaders of religious women in the St. Louis area, as well as with some laywomen in our system's corporate office. Quickly, these conversations became planning sessions for a day-long health care forum for Sisters.

By April 1986 the SSM Health Care System and the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, in collaboration with several religious communities, produced the first annual "Taking Care—A Health Forum for Women Religious." It was hosted by St. Mary's Health Center, one of our facilities, and staffed by about 60 women volunteers. That first gathering of 131 Sisters became the prototype for our annual Taking Care forums, which by the summer of 1992 had served 2,500 women religious in St. Louis, in Madison, Wisconsin, and in Joliet, Illinois.

In 1989, 385 Sisters registered for the St. Louis Taking Care program. Because of fire codes, we found ourselves turning away over 175 Sisters, promising them a place on the waiting list for 1990. As we planned the 1990 program, the advisory board and task force concurred that to accommo-

date the growing number of Sisters interested in the program, we should offer the 1990 program on two days. A survey of the Sisters indicated that the majority preferred that we offer the same program on Saturday and Sunday. As the 1990 Taking Care registration process intensified, we signed up the 178 Sisters from 1989 as well as additional Sisters, for a total registration of 367—67 more than the room wanted to hold.

In 1992 we registered 312 Sisters; we had to turn away over 75. We are currently discussing how to accommodate Sisters better in the future, especially those who have never attended Taking Care. One of our goals is to continue providing space for first-time participants.

SHARING INSIGHTS GAINED

In planning and producing Taking Care, we learned many things worth sharing with others who are in a position to encourage and support women religious in taking responsibility for their physical and emotional health.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of our work in these health forums was the sense of urgency we experienced. The Sisters in attendance were not among the customers who ordinarily come to our health care facilities, yet we had a special feeling of responsibility toward them. As soon as we saw the limitations in access to care for these women, whose lives are dedicated to serving others, we knew we had a clear call to fulfill our mission of providing quality care to those in need.

We also realized early on that Taking Care would not be a solution in itself, but rather the beginning of better health awareness for these Sisters.

We consistently encourage breast self-examinations. We distribute coupons for mammograms at our hospitals and at many Catholic and non-Catholic hospitals that collaborate with us in providing free mammograms and physician readings of the test. We suggest that Sisters discuss with their doctors anything that concerns them about test results they receive.

We emphasize each Sister's personal responsibility for following through on the mammogram coupon and information she receives, but we do not follow up with individual Sisters. We do, however, follow up with the participating hospitals to learn how many mammogram coupons have been redeemed and if any test results were positive.

Evidence of the need for an increased responsibility for well-being was found in the health assessment questionnaires returned by the first group of 131 participants in 1986. Of the respondents, only half had had a physical examination in the previous year, and almost 18 percent had not had one in four to seven years. More than 40 percent had not had a breast or pelvic examination in one to seven years. Fewer than half examined their breasts regularly; more than 25 percent said they never did so.

Our follow-up surveys, sent out six months after each event, consistently tell us that participants are taking more responsibility for their own health than they did before attending Taking Care. They also reveal positive changes in health habits.

The free mammogram coupons are being used by more than half of the participants. After every forum, at least one Sister has told us that she had a mammogram only because of the coupon, and that as a result her cancer was detected early enough to be treated successfully.

As a result of various health screenings, Sisters report controlling their cholesterol intake, as well as making other changes in their diets. More Sisters are exercising, examining their breasts, receiving physical examinations, and reducing the stress in their lives.

FOUNDATION FOR FORUM'S SUCCESS

Our vision for Taking Care is not limited to increasing health awareness. By demonstrating an authentic concern for the health of Sisters' bodies, minds, and spirits on one day of the year, we intend to inspire them to take better care of themselves all year round.

With that vision in mind, certain requirements for our Taking Care health forums have come to the forefront:

- excellent quality in every detail;
- collaborative planning with religious women from both large and small communities;
- a nonthreatening, women-only environment;
- a spirit of hospitality;
- a celebration of community through liturgy and meals; and
- ongoing evaluations to build improvements into subsequent forums.

We know that many Sisters, from years of dedication to poverty, have accustomed themselves to getting by with less than the best. Mindful of caring for others, they have perhaps come to believe that they do not deserve to be well cared for themselves. We want the participants in every Taking Care to experience the best we have to offer. We want them to leave the event with their spirits uplifted.

Since the beginning we have maintained essentially the same schedule for the day, adding variety through speakers' themes and through new screenings and services, as suggested by participants in their evaluations or by our advisors.

Taking Care begins early and informally, allowing Sisters to undergo various health screenings and make visits to educational displays. Participants can be screened for such things as cholesterol and glucose levels, blood pressure, hearing prob-

lems, and glaucoma. They might also obtain a colorectal kit, learn how to examine their breasts, have a massage, and talk with experts about such concerns as nutrition, foot care, exercise, and osteoporosis.

The official start of the day is a communal morning praise, followed by a welcome by the head of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary. In my role as president and chief executive officer of the SSM Health Care System, I make introductory remarks to set the theme of the day. From many comments made on written evaluations and in person, we have learned that the participation of the leaders of our system and of religious communities adds impact to our message about the importance of taking care of the whole person.

The remainder of the day is filled with presentations by two or three guest speakers, panel discussions, and opportunities for questions. During breaks, the Sisters visit with each other, pick up their test results, and visit the displays.

To increase the feeling of relaxation and at-homeness, all of the volunteers, staff, and speakers are women. We have learned that many Sisters are not comfortable discussing health issues or asking questions about personal matters in mixed-gender groups.

Our volunteers, both religious and lay, include religious women who serve on each Taking Care advisory board and members of each Taking Care task force, our system's corporate staff, and the sponsoring health care facility's staff. The spirit of care and camaraderie among the volunteers is so uplifting that many workers come back year after year.

Like our volunteers, the guest speakers at Taking Care are professional women, often religious, who bring not only their intelligence and wisdom but also a great respect for their audience. Believing in the ministry of Taking Care, our speakers waive their usual speaker's fees and graciously volunteer their time, which may include an entire weekend.

Over the years, we have had excellent presentations on topics such as taking care of the entire person, communication, stress resolution, building self-esteem, and embodied spirituality. The speakers serve as models of women who take care of others and who also take good care of themselves in all dimensions of their lives.

Two elements of the day that add much to the spirit of community and compassion that we strive to create are the luncheon and the closing liturgy. While these might appear to some to be extraneous activities at a health care forum, we believe they are vitally important in ministering to these religious women.

During the day, some Sisters feel concerned by the questions that arise about their physical health and condition. Although these questions are important, our commitment is to have religious women

leave Taking Care empowered and uplifted, not discouraged.

By celebrating together at lunch and during the liturgy, the participants experience a sense of community and are reminded that they are part of a strong network of human and divine support. We want them to leave knowing that it has been a privilege and a joy for us to serve them.

BUILDING THE FORUM

The success of the health forums that we have offered in the St. Louis archdiocese, and in the region of our facility in Madison, Wisconsin, St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center, has prompted the SSM Health Care System to make available the Taking Care operations manual to other religious-sponsored health care systems and institutions. The first group to adopt Taking Care was the Franciscan Sisters Health Care Corporation, which offered its second annual forum to Sisters in the diocese of Joliet, Illinois, in September 1992.

The operations manual emphasizes how to build quality, service, planning, and evaluation into the program, and how to maintain those elements. We have established the requirement that at least two task force members of the sponsoring group be trained by an SSM Health Care System staff member who is experienced with Taking Care. We also assign one of our staff to be available for consultation and attendance at the group's meetings.

The philosophical foundation for Taking Care, described earlier, is extremely important. Yet the importance of the foundation is rivaled by that of the building itself. To fulfill the mission of Taking Care requires broad-based collaboration, precise

planning, professional administration and coordination, and the level of logistical expertise possessed by the finest meeting planner. Our experience suggests that the site for Taking Care should be a hospital or medical center, so that there is ready access to the facilities and technical personnel.

Collaboration for Taking Care begins with an advisory board, consisting of eight to ten Sisters from the area's religious communities and chaired, ideally, by the chief executive of the health care system. This group's responsibilities are:

- planning the theme and suggesting health screenings, services, and information booths;
- using their networks to recruit effective speakers;
- spreading the word about Taking Care in their communities and elsewhere;
- serving as hostesses at Taking Care; and
- evaluating and proposing improvements when the forum is over.

Working closely with the advisory board is the task force, appointed by the board's chair. The task force is the action arm of Taking Care. This group must be led by someone who is excellent at managing numerous details simultaneously and who can oversee many subprojects. Its members come from the staff of the host facility and the corporate office of the system; they represent a number of specialized fields, such as communications, marketing, nursing, and education. The task force coordinates and executes literally thousands of details to ensure the event's success. Among the jobs they are called upon to handle are:

- preparing all of the advertising and promotional materials;
- implementing the advisory board's recommendations for speakers, liturgy, exhibits, screenings, etc.;
- planning the facility space, parking, and security;
- making arrangements for guest speakers;
- coordinating the registration packets, name tags, and programs; and
- arranging for snacks, luncheon, music, and decorations.

Over the seven years of its implementation, Taking Care has cost about $20,000 per event. The expenses include costs associated with the health screenings, travel expenses for speakers, printing, meals, snacks, postage, and overtime for paid em-

ployees. The costs of our Taking Care programs have been absorbed by the SSM Health Care System, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, and the host facility. The registration fee is kept as low as possible—usually $15 to $20 per participant.

EVERYONE BENEFITS

We have discovered that the benefits of Taking Care flow in many directions. Almost everyone involved, whether as a participant, volunteer, or speaker, has reported getting something of value out of these gatherings.

Those who serve are energized and invigorated by the opportunity to be with participants in such a personal and compassionate way. The Sisters who come as participants report feeling empowered to find out more about the state of their health and to ask direct questions of their physicians and other health care providers. In their responses to our surveys, they mention being inspired by the professional women who volunteered or who addressed them. Some who attend with other members of their individual houses report a new sense of intimacy and relatedness among those with whom they live, and a feeling of freedom to discuss health issues or other topics that have been themes of Taking Care. Some Sisters say that Taking Care helped them face a personal issue they had not wanted to deal with. Others say they have even become more attentive to how other Sisters in their house community are taking care of themselves.

At the end of every Taking Care sponsored by the SSM Health Care System, those of us who have planned and implemented it are left with a deep sense of satisfaction and joy. We come together to learn and celebrate with our Sisters from other communities. And we come together to offer the special charism of our health care apostolate. In the sharing of both our similarities and our differences, the bond among us grows stronger.

Sister Mary Jean Ryan, F.S.M., is president and chief executive officer of the SSM Health Care System, headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. She serves on the board of trustees of St. Louis University and of the Catholic Health Association. In 1990 the National Conference of Christians and Jews awarded Sister Mary Jean its Brotherhood/Sisterhood Award.

Lazarus in Winter

James Torrens, S.J.

Midtown Revue

I

Frida,
ribboned and bobbed,
a doorman bows
    her out.

Talk about deference,
talk about groomed.

Freddy,
as sleek as suede,
brushed up, brushed
    down.

Talk about prancing,
talk about spruce.

Three on a leash,
three pug faces,
not allowed near dirt.

Somebody loves them,
somebody bathes.

Goldie,
huggable, all fluff,
and foxy white Yvonne.

Somebody's shagrug,
somebody's shampooed
    dear.

II

Nobody's pet
sleeps in a mound,
her boots stick out.

No name
pushes a hamper,
pulls a trolley along.

Hair mat,
hands never still,
talks up a fury.

Santa
with rattling sack
stoops at a trash bin.

Anyone
squirms at the notice:
facilities locked.

Somebody,
clothes and all,
Bathes in the
    TIME-LIFE pool.

A good friend of mine, who was born in Mexico, recently asked some relatives to teach her how to say grace before meals in Spanish; she had forgotten. The brief prayer gives thanks for the meal and then asks God to provide food to those who don't have it. She is indignant at the wording. It sounds to her like foisting off responsibility, leaving the needy up to God. How does God normally provide, if not through us?

Jesus said much the same thing in the parable of Lazarus, the one whose name, in the Hebrew, means "He whom God helps." The rich man in the parable left the helping up to God. He didn't lift a finger—nor, I suppose, did any of his prosperous friends, who picked their way around Lazarus on their way in to visit, so as to avoid his dirt and lice. Only the scruffy dogs took some pity on the poor creature.

We have Lazarus at our door all the time, one way or another, literally or figuratively. Hunger for the word of God—"a famine of the word of God," as Amos (8:11) puts it—afflicts a legion of our neighbors, the people about whom God said to Jonah, with commiseration, "They do not know their left hand from their right" (4:11). Even if half unawares, they look continually for true sustenance wherever it can be found.

Also the people with their bagfuls of trouble are at our door, or at the other end of our telephone, constantly. How many burdens weigh on the men and women of today; what confusion and anguish rake them. Has there ever before been such heaviness of heart? Have we ever before met so many people muttering to themselves, or spraying invective around them without particular aim?

This winter I myself have Lazarus at my door again, quite literally. Night after night he is huddled at the warm-air vent outside the building in which I live, without even a cover from the rain. (When I first arrived here two years ago the Lazarus was a woman.) Several months ago I told a class of students about this presence at our threshold. "How can you go to sleep at night with him out there?" a student asked me, in genuine distress. Answer: I just do.

The rich man, in hell, wanted Lazarus to go back and warn his brothers not to be as selfish as he had been. "They've got the scriptures," says Abraham. "Let them listen to them." The lesson still holds. Moses, who was so full of prescriptions, keeps pointing us toward the widow, the alien, the orphan. The prophet Amos keeps rebuking the idle rich. Isaiah and Jeremiah insist that pious words are empty without deeds. And St. James reminds us how futile it is to wish someone well without providing anything tangible. As for Jesus himself, this was his new commandment.

Among the things to be proud of—however frustrated we ourselves may feel, and even however ashamed—are the provider-saints of the present and the past, like Martin de Porres and Vincent de Paul. The latter urged his followers, "Love the poor as your masters." I keep encountering the St. Vincent de Paul Society in jails these days, arranging for mass, visiting and encouraging the prisoners, helping some to sobriety and recovery from drug addiction. The Daughters of Charity too, in the same tradition, carry on their hospital care, along with so many other Sisters and Brothers, in an era when illness makes everyone poor. May they have the grace and ingenuity not to be mastered by the financial pressures that are closing so many hospital doors to the poor.

These reflections end up, inevitably, with a desperate turn to the Holy Spirit. Help us, please, to stretch our imaginations and even our resources. Teach us not only when to respond, and how, but also the ways to make some more profound difference, to provoke bigger and more substantial changes. A homeless person joined me on a park bench last week and, after displaying the soiled clothes he had that needed the laundromat, was biblically eloquent about the seeming unconcern of our nation: "They have eyes but see not; they have ears but hear not."

Calls for assistance are coming in from all over the globe. The third world as a whole is Lazarus, Pope John Paul has told us. We cannot let ourselves get fixated on our own doorstep. Yet and still, as they say in the South, where does the world start—the world with all its sores, which the dogs come gingerly to lick—if not on our doorstep?

James Torrens, S.J., is an associate editor of *America*.

Vincentian Twelve-Step Program

In January 1990 some of the Vincentian brothers and priests of the Province of the West celebrated the first anniversary of their meeting by launching their own twelve-step program. In that program, five to ten confreres gather once a month to share some of the issues they are dealing with personally and to support each other as members of the same religious congregation. The meetings follow a typical twelve-step format. A leader is chosen in an informal way. He starts the meeting with a moment of silence, followed by a recitation of the Serenity Prayer. Next an adapted portion of chapter 3 of the *Big Book* of Alcoholics Anonymous is read, as well as the twelve steps of Codependents Anonymous. The steps for the codependents' program are used because they are generic enough to encompass the principles of the various twelve-step programs represented by the members of the Vincentian group. Next the members introduce themselves, and the leader either proposes a topic for consideration or (more typically) opens the floor for general sharing. After one hour, the meeting closes with the Lord's Prayer.

When the first meeting was announced to the members of the community, many didn't know what a twelve-step program was, and several made inquiries. After a year of hearing about the program, all the community members are familiar with it, even though some are still unsure of what happens at the meetings.

The confreres who come to these meetings also participate in twelve-step programs open to laypersons (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Adult Children of Alcoholics) and have noted that some topics are easier to talk about with the Vincentian group. Because most laypersons don't understand the context or living situation of religious, they sometimes have difficulty in understanding their sharing. The Vincentian meetings provide a supportive context for the confreres to grow together and to encourage each other in their spiritual journey.

—*Jim Osendorf, C.M.*

Homelessness and Education for Ministry

Victoria Erickson, M. Div., Ph.D., and Marc L. Greenberg

Academic courses in educational institutions are developed for many reasons: a department requires it, students demand it, a professor is writing a book about a particular subject and needs feedback; the list is long. To this list we add our own reasons: wanting to test whether it was possible, in the social space of the classroom, for the academy and a local community, for Jews and Christians, and for seminarians and homeless persons to come together to learn about each other, help solve social problems, and advance the well-being of all groups, especially that of the homeless. On a theoretical level we wanted to test whether it was possible simultaneously to satisfy the academic requirements of the seminaries and the very different requirements of community-based education. On a practical level we wanted to see what would happen when future rabbis, pastors, and social workers in dual seminary/university programs were introduced to people without homes in a context in which they were peers—colleagues in the struggle to understand the social and spiritual crises that produce homelessness.

MOTIVATING COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Over a period of many months we (the authors) met to discuss common personal, community, and institutional concerns about the growing numbers of homeless persons, the widening gap in New York City's provision of housing and social services, and the similar gap in synagogue and church response to homelessness. Although effective bridges were and are being built to close these gaps, the many needs are so profound that we found ourselves pushed into new areas of research.

We discovered that our respective involvement in housing issues over the years was motivated by personal faith and a community-validated sense of vocational calling to understand the social construction of shelter and to find ways to preserve and build homes. This uniting of faith and politics—played out in synagogue, church, and community—facilitated a tension that insisted that the voices of excluded and socially marginalized people be heard.

Marc Greenberg's work organizing people without homes found that they had a deep desire to understand their social exclusion and made progress in identifying the causal factors in homelessness. Frequently, their understandings expressed an implicit theology of homelessness. Victoria Erickson's interfaith work with clergy found that they were frequently trained to think theologically, but rarely sociologically, about social problems. Even so, clergy had developed understandings of homelessness particular to their social locations. Urban challenges require rabbis and pastors to become self-taught social theorists and practitioners; still, they often reported that they

Where is God in homelessness? What should a theology of homelessness look like?

wished their seminary educations had helped them learn how to interact with the subjects of their congregational mission projects, as well as how to understand that interaction.

In an effort to bridge the needs of these two populations, we codesigned a course for people without homes and for seminarians, who in various ways expressed a desire to know each other. To this primary relationship we knew that we had to add introductions to many other actors involved in the social drama of shelter provision, so that the seminarians might discover how to work interprofessionally to accomplish congregational mission. The course, titled "New York City Exposure: Housing and Homelessness," had many layers of goals and expectations.

GOALS OF THE COURSE

In retrospect, we find that concurrent maintenance of community-organizing goals and academic goals was made easier for us because we are both community organizers who hold an appreciation for the academic world. In addition, we are committed to the notion of "fair exchange" when using the social world as a classroom, and we held each other accountable to a mode of learning that requires reciprocity. We sought to make sure that both the seminary and homeless populations benefited by the intervention of the academy in the social world.

CHARTING GOAL TERRAIN

Our community organizational goals were to support homeless people, to raise the consciousness of both the housed and the nonhoused, to mobilize the faithful into action, to use seminarian interest to expand the network of support for congregations in action, and to educate future clergy on necessary changes in public policy. The traditional "book-learning" goals were to introduce the students to the demographic facts of homelessness, to expose them to the literature on the subject, and to test their competence in manipulating the available information in the development of a social theory of homelessness. Our theological goals were to open these questions: Where is God in homelessness? What should a theology of homelessness look like?

Because half of our class was made up of white, middle-class, liberal Christians—a group that stereotypically underutilizes scriptural texts for reflection on social problems—we wanted to nudge them into biblical reflection. Our ministerial goals were to encourage cooperative learning among Jews and Christians, homeless and nonhomeless, and to give the students an opportunity to practice the art of community building. Our interinstitutional goal was to discover how a seminary and a coalition of community synagogues and churches could work together in an ongoing effort to affect the realities of homelessness. In practice, these goals had to be compressed to fit into the standard time frame for a three-credit, one-semester course.

FORMING OPERATIONAL GOALS

The following list of goals was built upon our working assumptions about goal achievement in community-development ministries. This list guided the construction of the syllabus.

Goal 1: To make visible and effective our support of homeless persons through the pedagogical activity of understanding the social context of housing and homelessness and of developing a religious or theological response.

Experience has taught us that it is difficult to build a theology or a case for mission for a social problem without an understanding of the social context. Our support for people without homes depends on our understanding of the sociopolitical-economic context that produces homelessness.

Goal 2: To support congregational mission in the world by engaging its seminarians in community ministry, thereby demonstrating that social-action ministry is a practical accomplishment that must be approached intentionally and with a great deal of common sense.

Through our work in the community we discovered a need to provide opportunities for seminarians, clergy, and laity to learn the fundamentals of forming community ministries—how to talk and work with social workers, community organizers, government officials, other clergy, and the people whose lives need our intervention.

Goal 3: To lay the groundwork for dialogue between the housed and the not-housed—dialogue that builds community and effects the creation of public policy as more people (who vote) learn about each other.

Lacking the opportunity to meet face-to-face with the people at the center of our social ministries, we lack the opportunity to shape an equitable relationship before an exchange of material resources takes place. We are often left, then, thinking of ministry to and for a person or group of persons who become the object of an effort. Encouraging the formation of a nonhierarchical relationship among all the actors involved in a social ministry helps to create a sustainable community on a journey toward social transformation. This journey soon teaches us that congregational ministry can no longer be considered something one congregation does by itself; the act of community ministry requires many actors who are held accountable to each other.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To register, seminarians had to consent to three conditions. First, they each had to agree to be a student-colleague with ten students who were homeless. Second, they had to agree to participate in three mini-exposure events outside the classroom. They selected one exposure from each of three types of settings: (1) a source of primary care, such as a soup kitchen or shelter; (2) a social-service setting; and (3) a community legislative-action organization. The options within these categories brought them into contact with a variety of neighborhoods and leadership styles in the city's housing and homelessness-advocacy network. Third, they had to agree to keep a journal that documented their experiences, on which a fifteen-page paper was to be based.

Homeless students had a different set of requirements. They agreed to (1) participate in a socialization group developed and run by the New York archdiocese's Catholic Charities outreach program to homeless persons (this program matched them to our seminarians and supervised the resocialization process); (2) reflect during the week on the course topics up for discussion and, when possible, discuss reflections with a peer participant and members of the Interfaith Assembly; and (3) come to class weekly, knowing that their presence was critical to the success of the course.

COURSE SYLLABUS

Session 1. The first classroom meeting of the course was canceled, which gave the students an intensive two-week reading period between registration and the first meeting. It also reinforced our stated assumption that the most significant learning in this class was not going to happen within the

Encouraging a nonhierarchical relationship among all the actors involved in a social ministry helps to create a sustainable community on a journey toward social transformation

walls of the seminary. Unbeknownst to the students, these two weeks were freed up so that Marc Greenberg could organize the group of homeless people who would participate in the class. Given the realities of homelessness, long-range planning is impossible to do; people are moved from shelter to shelter and have to be searched for, and some inevitably get sick or die. The first principle one needs to learn before tackling this kind of education is that life on the street does not operate according to our appointment books.

Session 2. Introducing ourselves to each other and to the history of homelessness in the United States was our first corporate task. We watched a video on contemporary homelessness. The class discussion of the video revealed that both populations of students were surprised to learn that homelessness and the conditions that produce it have always existed in the United States. These problems were swept westward and somewhat alleviated during the World Wars and the brief periods when the national government had working housing policies. Rooting our context historically was a critical learning experience.

Session 3. The students participated in one of the exposure events in shelters, soup kitchens, and other direct services.

Session 4. The whole class held a potluck supper (everybody brings a dish) at the shelter that housed most of the participating homeless students. The shelter residents provided the main course. They were pleased to entertain guests, and the housed students experienced a challenge to their stereo-

type of the homeless as people who need the housed to provide food and care.

Session 5. A guest—Paul Coleson, coordinator of the Coalition of Voluntary Mental Health and Retardation Agencies—lectured on the "function of public policy in the housing crisis."

Session 6. Over the course of two days, an inter-religious, interracial team of students led worship during the seminary's chapel hour. A student without a home gave the homily.

Session 7. The students were invited to attend a "candidates for political office forum" organized by Jewish housing activists.

Session 8. Guest lecturers Theresa Kilbane of the Urban Housing Assistance Board and David Calvert of the Youth Assistance Project facilitated a discussion of urban planning and the role of community organizing in social transformation.

Session 9. Led by a team of housed and nonhoused students, the class reflected on their immersion experiences and other class events.

Session 10. The students organized an on-campus forum and invited an elected official—Ruth Messinger, currently Manhattan borough president—to speak to the community about the future role of clergy in solving housing problems.

Session 11. Led by a mixed group of students, the class moved toward developing a social theory and theology of homelessness.

Session 12. An evaluation session and a festive party marked the end of the course.

COURSE EVALUATION

Question 1. Were we able to create a sense of support for the persons without homes—one that made a difference in their lives—through classroom learning about the social context of homelessness? The answer is yes. The students without homes were able to evaluate a change in themselves. From their perspective, their desire not to give up was strengthened. Being considered peers of the seminarians improved the self-esteem and self-confidence of the homeless students and motivated them to keep learning about their lives, to develop skills in interpersonal and public communication, and to value the patience necessary to teach themselves and to be taught by others about their lives.

Through a systematic review of the structural reasons for the housing shortage, several homeless people were empowered to take what control they could, while anchored in the city system, to push toward establishing an ongoing support community. Several became willing residents in transitional housing that required their active participation in small-group recovery processes. By learning that they were caught up in a historic American struggle to provide decent shelter for themselves and their families, they were able to reevaluate society's perception that it is primarily the fault of the homeless that they are homeless. They discovered that contrary to popular belief, there is no more drug or alcohol abuse in the homeless population than in the housed population.

The one-to-one relationships that were built allowed homeless students to acknowledge and act on their pain and anger in constructive ways. Previous to intervention in their lives, many of the homeless people engaged in self-destructive behaviors because of their anger at the realization that society was not working for them and had caused them to lose so much, including such basic things as a place to sleep and people with whom to talk. Rechanneled, this anger was seen to have a constructive, community-building effect, as they found themselves to be fully human in the eyes of others.

Claiming humanness becomes the first step in the recovery process. Recovering from their voicelessness within society, the homeless students created and became active in a "speakers' bureau," and discovered that they had a voice all along. The speakers' bureau travels to churches, synagogues, and schools, educating people on the problems related to our national housing crisis. Through Marc Greenberg's efforts, this group of students was adopted into Catholic Charities' mentoring programs, which continue to support their efforts at developing self-esteem and practicing self-help. The thin line between constructive and destructive dependency on society for one's psychological and spiritual well-being was walked by all the students and the conveners.

Question 2. In what ways was congregational mission supported by this class? First, the seminarians (who were not already convinced) discovered that community-organizing ministries for, with, by, and to people without homes were a practical possibility for congregations. Second, congregational mission will be strengthened by several seminarians who went on to work as volunteer community organizers in the housing movement (at least one is in this ministry full-time). These people provide consulting services or hands-on demonstrations based on their experience. Two students went on to organize their congregation's first response to homelessness, focusing on direct service to people without homes. The long-term effect will have to be evaluated at a future time.

In addition, seminarians were spiritually changed by their experiences in the course. As one

said, "I learned that homeless people are just like me." Several seminarians carried on personal relationships with their new colleagues by inviting them to regular potluck dinners in their dorms and by remaining "telephone buddies." The seminarians realized how insular the clerical profession can be as they discovered ways to enlist people who would have traditionally been considered unlikely candidates into their community of learning. From the conveners' perspective, the observation that "one cannot know or serve well unless one is known and served by the target population" summarizes the value of offering the class.

All the students realized that they could not go back to where they were before; they were now different people. The seminarians wanted more from themselves as moral agents, more from their congregations as bearers of tradition, and more from their theological education as the primary resource available to organizing communities of faith.

Question 3. Was solid ground established for continued dialogue between the housed and the not-housed that will effect the building of community and the creation of public policy? Inasmuch as any effort in this area facilitates the building of networks and prompts personal and social change, even if only in small ways, the answer is yes. However, it is important to detail how the students laid the groundwork for continued dialogue. First, they learned that their generalized and collective anger at American society for the conditions that cause homelessness could be used constructively as they gathered energy to work with congregations on specific responses. They determined that to go out into a hostile world, they needed to create what they called "safe spaces" for themselves as a collective of housed and not-housed people. The creation of safe space was seen by them as a work of nurture, facilitated by an ethic of kindness and an abundance of grace.

Second, they learned that we had designed the course so that they had to form a community of learning to stay in the class. By the second week it was clear to everyone that each person had to give up something so that a community could be formed. Working intuitively, they discovered that the most obvious thing to start with was the ideological understanding of homelessness that they brought to the classroom. Feminist theories involving patriarchy and marxist theories of capitalist alienation were too foreign to some members of this diverse group to be useful working tools. Also, in a comic reversal of stereotypes, the seminarians had a hard time accepting the theological language of the homeless students, who clearly defined the problem as one of sinfulness. By midsemester the students arrived at a collective and negotiated language for the causes of homelessness. Once connected by a common language, they could chal-

> # The students realized that they could not go back to where they were before; they were now different people

lenge each other's understanding of theology and politics.

This process of establishing relationships of accountability spilled over into involved institutions in unexpected but welcome ways. The Interfaith Assembly now has people without homes on its board of directors, and Union Theological Seminary is now an institutional member of the Interfaith Assembly. We learned that to a greater extent than expected, the class was not over when the semester ended. Seminarians are conditioned to make and disengage relationships on semester rotation. The students without homes are not so conditioned. Both groups felt a loss at the termination of the class, and both had to work hard in postclass sessions to address this pain. We were able to conclude that building good social ministry is like building good community: both make demands on us. Both call us into concrete relationships that cannot and should not be ended at the close of the semester. This is the hard part about teaching social ministry. The instructors have to mediate relationships so that appropriate expectations result. Even so, if we have buried our hands deep in the yeasty dough of ministry, we cannot easily remove them. We continue to feel, hear, see, touch, and remember the people we have engaged. If that engagement has been authentic, we will in various ways be called back into their lives.

Question 4. How did the students evaluate the course? After agreeing that they would take the course again, they argued for increasing the credit assignment to six. They felt they had put in twice the work they had anticipated. Their suggestion was to separate the theory from the practice or to

include less of each. The students without homes wanted the class to continue into the next term.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EXPERIMENT

This pedagogical experiment leads us to conclude that traditional seminary education would have nothing to lose and everything to gain if it were to become community-based education. Students in this class were more highly motivated than in other classes to read beyond the assigned readings. Community-based education helps bridge the gap between cultures and enriches the learning process. Rabbinic focus on scripture added more than we had anticipated to the class's understanding of biblical ethics. The Jewish-Christian dialogue and cooperative labor produced effective worship in James Chapel and resulted in an invitation from Jewish Theological Seminary students to Union students to participate in their community's worship life.

A bridging of the gap between housed and not-housed cultures was witnessed by us in the seminarian student's willingness to stop and talk to homeless people on the street, to engage in eye contact and conversation with them, and to remain in contact with the nonseminarians after the course was over.

Through this course Union Theological Seminary and the Interfaith Assembly, as neighborhood institutions, contributed to the well-being of homeless people. This course provided the critical element of social acceptance in the lives of people who face the hard work of recovering from social disenfranchisement. This contribution might be considered small, but it seems to us that just as the ranks of homeless are filled one person at a time, so too must they be depleted one person at a time. We do not know yet what the long-term effect of this intervention will be, but we do believe that social institutions, especially tax-exempt educational ones, have access to the resources they need to do their share in the work of social transformation.

Our students were right: this type of class is exhausting. It is the kind of class that can be offered only once a year (maybe once every other year) by any one faculty member. It also draws away from the nonprofit community-organizing sector a tremendous amount of highly skilled labor, which is normally in short supply. In order to keep their agencies running, our consultants and one coconvener had to make up their absence on personal time. All were willing to do this "for the cause." It is clear that community-based courses must be spread over a wide spectrum of community activity, and grant-related fund-raising is necessary to offset the contributions the community makes to theological education.

Homeward Bound and Marc Greenberg's contribution through Interfaith Assembly were the critical factors in this experiment. At the same time, Union Theological Seminary offered the Interfaith Assembly a site at which to test new programs. To our surprise and delight, several students in transition to long-term shelter discovered liberation theology and are now reading James Cone aloud to companions as they try to work out an empowering theology and social ethic.

In the process of learning the names of several people without homes, faculty, students, and two institutions learned to name and rename themselves as participants in the creation of a just response to homelessness. Learning to name ourselves and our participation in the creation of social life is what contextual theology is about. Learning to call someone by name is contextual theology in action. Without contextual theology in action, social ministry is impossible.

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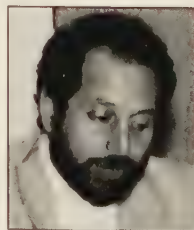
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Building Diversity-Affirming Communities

Deborah L. Plummer, Ph.D.

As we approach the next millennium, organizations are preparing to meet the challenges and demands of a more culturally diverse America. Institutions are struggling with how to utilize better the increasing numbers of women, people of color, and immigrants entering the work force. In order to remain productive, organizations have to change and/or adapt the fundamental decision making, problem solving, and behavioral strategies of the total system to include issues of diversity. This process is long-term and not an easy task by any means. It requires a total commitment to the process, a readiness to scrutinize the present, an ability to recognize what needs to be changed and create a vision for the future. This hard work, however, does not go unrewarded. The benefits of valuing diversity in organizations are limitless. Productivity and creativity increase, and morale is enhanced. It can be predicted with a high degree of certainty that organizations that do not attend to these challenges and do not value diversity as a resource will suffer great losses or may even die.

Just as companies are developing new strategies to meet the needs of the changing American work force, religious communities are faced with developing new ways of addressing ministry and recruitment in a multicultural society. For a long time men and women religious relied on traditional ministry interventions. They spread the Word the way it was spread to them. It worked. People liked what they heard, and many liked what they saw and joined religious communities. Communities attracted people who were similar to their membership in terms of cultural makeup. This was not unusual. It is a natural tendency to surround oneself with people who look like you, think like you, and behave like you. Recruitment worked well when there were plenty of people of like values and similar cultural makeup in the pool of applicants. Today the pool is smaller, and the composition of the pool is very different. People of color, old people, divorced people, differently abled people, and homosexuals are now a significant part of the pool. Are religious communities prepared to adapt and change their systems to become more culturally diverse?

The initial response to this question is a resounding yes. After all, is this not what the gospel values are based on—all disciples coming together to hold all things in common? Valuing diversity in religious life would seem to be automatic. With further thought, one might challenge religious communities to undertake diversity efforts.

RELIGIOUS LIFE AS CULTURE

Motivated by similar religious values and goals, men and women come together to share a design for living. In doing so they establish a culture. The new entrant into religious life absorbs this culture

through the process of formation. As a result of the formation process, his or her self-perception and worldview are altered.

Values, which vary from culture to culture and from person to person, are the basis of a worldview. In a religious culture, the values shared by the members are similar. Thus, the model of how men and women religious make sense of the world is similar. For the novice, the community's cultural lens, through which it sees and interprets the world, becomes his or her lens. As a result of formation, religious life becomes the new culture out of which the member operates.

Although there is no one model of a religious community or a prototype of a religious, there are characteristics typical of most religious cultures. For example, religious communities can be described as spiritually based, supportive of education and the arts, drug-free, unworldly, people-oriented, and service-minded. Arguably, it can also be stated that a religious culture's high cohesiveness leads to "group-think." It was once seen as a plus that if you knew one member of a religious community, you knew them all.

ASSIMILATION AS STRATEGY

In the past it was important for the new entrant to shed his or her own culture in order to join the mainstream religious culture. This was not too difficult for many novices because religious communities attracted members of similar cultural makeup and like values. Depending on how closely the novice's cultural makeup fit the religious culture, the degree of assimilation was lessened. Entrants' worldviews were changed to match the culture. The religious culture remained immutable. Because the nature of religious culture was based on gospel values and focused on ministry, the fact that it did not change was acceptable. When members did not conform to the culture, the problem was assessed as being spiritually or personally grounded in that member.

VALUING DIVERSITY IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

Formation of the past was designed (like training in most organizations) to provide equal treatment for all its entrants. Equal treatment (again, as in most organizations) meant the same treatment. A person's needs were addressed in the same manner as were those of every other religious with the same needs. If one person was allowed a benefit, all could receive it. Uniformity was the basis of community. Equal treatment worked fairly well when individuals of similar cultural makeup and values made up the membership. Today, individuals bring to religious communities diverse cultural backgrounds (beyond European) and values, diverse levels of maturity, and diverse emotional histories.

The melting-pot concept, which was the model of integration in American society, was also the model for assimilation in religious communities. On both a societal and a community level, we are now aware of the fact that differences do not easily melt. Effectively dealing with differences has been the task of organizations and religious communities over the past few decades.

Dealing with difference on any level always presents a challenge. Until people establish a common ground, there is a great deal of stress. Nontraditional entrants to religious life (people of color, older people, divorced people, differently abled people, homosexuals) bring about changes. The expression of religious life becomes different, and traditional members become uncomfortable. The dominant fear is that the values of religious life will change and the meaning of religious life will be lost. Under stress (which automatically comes with change) people return to their original cultural lens, with all its stereotypes and biases. Members who were initially supportive and possibly even excited about the prospect of including nontraditional members become resistant when that prospect becomes a reality. The otherness of the non-traditional members becomes a threat, and traditional members react strongly against what is different. They believe that all the emphasis on valuing diversity serves only to perpetuate division and break down community. For many religious communities this reaction by traditional members takes the form of denial and avoidance. Communities who use this defense conduct business as usual when it comes to recruitment and formation. When nontraditional members leave, the reasoning is that "it did not work out," and that it was "too much of an adjustment for them." Other communities that recognize that valuing diversity is a necessity in today's world struggle with incorporating diversity into their formation programs while maintaining their traditional religious values and life-style. Valuing diversity in religious communities may be an integral part of religious communities' worldviews, but it is an extremely difficult concept to translate into reality.

DESIGNING DIVERSITY GOALS

Over the years religious communities have put energy into increasing minority membership. Community members have sought out lectures, workshops, and consultants on how to recruit people of color into religious communities. Although these efforts are certainly commendable, they constitute a movement in the wrong direction. The right direction is a movement inward to examine whether or not the community's structures and attitudes accept diversity. Achieving diversity-affirming communities is a process, and not something that will happen as the outcome of work-

shops, courses, and reading. Workshops are merely a step in the process. Each community member must make an inner reorientation of his or her own acceptance of diversity. The challenge of this process lies in attitude change, which at best is a difficult type of change to make.

When a community realizes the necessity for change and becomes committed to building a diversity-affirming community, then the work of valuing diversity begins. The following paragraphs outline the steps for designing diversity goals in communities. Because achieving diversity is a process, these steps are not intended to be locked into a special order or position. In reality, individuals and communities do not follow a linear path when moving toward affirming diversity. Rather, they experience a spiral effect, often cycling back through beginning steps as growth occurs. Therefore, I caution the reader not to treat these steps as a checklist for achieving a diversity-affirming community. Instead, the steps should be understood as guidelines for a process.

STEP 1: ASSESSMENT OF READINESS

The assimilation model for integration previously used in religious communities emphasized the similarities among members. Emphasizing similarities as a first step, although not necessarily negative, is too premature in the process for valuing diversity. When we emphasize similarities we are on safe and often superficial ground. It is not uncommon to use one's own behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs as criteria for standard behavior. Thus, we tend to presume that because we share one factor or level of similarity with an individual, that individual resembles us on all counts. This first step in the process requires the community to talk about differences and to assess the community's adaptability to change. What has the change process been like for the community at large and for the individual? How has the community dealt with psychological losses in the past? How do individuals deal with psychological losses? What kinds of steps have been made in order to deal with changes?

STEP 2: GAINING KNOWLEDGE

This step allows the community and each individual member to heighten their own cultural awareness and recognize how they operate out of their own culture. Members explore their own "isms" and examine their stereotypes and biases. This is best done through workshops that are both experiential and didactic and use multicultural presenters as models. Workshops assist community members in exploring diversity issues and accepting their cultural identity. What knowledge do individuals have about their own culture? How do

they feel about their culture in relation to other cultures? What specific knowledge do they have about other cultural groups? Where does this information come from—the media? formal education? personal experience?

STEP 3: SKILL BUILDING

This step involves skill building around issues of diversity. Members examine racism, sexism, homophobia, and other destructive attitudes and beliefs in order to understand their own and others' discriminatory behaviors. They learn how to handle cultural clashes and to express differences in productive, healthy ways. The process is one of learning and practicing cross-cultural communication skills in order to become culturally competent. Are members able to define racism, sexism, and homophobia in a way that shows they understand how these issues operate in their lives? Do they understand the various cultural labels and the different meanings that are attached to these labels, depending on who assigns them? Are they able to understand that cultural identification influences patterns of interaction? Can members describe and explore cultural clashes in their experience?

STEP 4: IDENTIFICATION OF BARRIERS

This step involves a careful evaluation of the concrete and psychological barriers that would prevent or place limits on movement toward a diversity-affirming community. This process involves a considerable amount of risk taking because it requires the community as a whole, as well as all the individual members, to honestly name their resistances. After the barriers are delineated, the community and individuals can assess the degree of power they feel they have to remove each barrier. What degree of willingness is there in the community to name and accept racism, sexism, and homophobia? How do individuals and the community in general deal with their fears? How ready are individuals and the community to accept a multicultural identity?

STEP 5: ANALYSIS OF CURRENT STATUS

Once issues of diversity are identified, it is relatively easy for a community to name areas of community life that already incorporate diversity values. The other side of the coin is to identify and own the areas in which the community has engaged in denial and/or avoidance. Often input from outsiders—for example, laity and ex-members of the community—is needed for an accurate assessment of these areas. An inventory could be designed to determine the community's perceived image in terms of diversity. What percentage of community members are people of color? How are

members recruited? Are there people of color in administration? Does the community have a written policy regarding diversity? Is the formation process inclusive of diversity issues? How are black and other minority images depicted in the community's advertisements? What kind of track record does the community have for relationships (not just service) in minority communities?

STEP 6: DEVELOPING ACTION PLANS

At this point in the process each individual member has enough knowledge and skills to take an inventory of his or her personal strengths and weaknesses around valuing diversity. A written personal action plan can then be made, outlining specific attitudinal and behavioral interventions the person needs to learn or use in order to be culturally competent. The plan includes a personal values clarification section, a list of awarenesses recognized through gaining diversity knowledge, a list of specific knowledge and skills the individuals feel they possess, and a needs assessment that includes a list of specific knowledge and skill objectives to be achieved and a summary of the emotional barriers the individual may be struggling with in accepting a culturally diverse community.

STEP 7: DEVELOPING COMMUNITY GOALS

This is phase one of strategic planning for long-term valued diversity in the community. On the basis of members' individual goals, the community formulates goals for the organization. These goals should be realistic and obtainable. Short-term goals should be differentiated from long-term goals, and all should be listed according to their priority. Examples of community goals are: to efficiently review, plan, conduct, and evaluate the formation program to ensure that it includes issues of cultural diversity; to have each member of the community become culturally competent in both knowledge and skills; to write a policy outlining the community's stance on diversity.

STEP 8: OUTLINING COMMUNITY TASKS

This is phase two of strategic planning, and it requires the community to outline the specific tasks it must accomplish in order to achieve its goals and become a culturally competent community. For example, the community might establish a calendar of events, including a series of workshops on valuing diversity, community celebrations of ethnic holidays not normally celebrated, and individual practices members can perform to become culturally competent.

STEP 9: EVALUATION

Six months to a year after the goals and tasks are outlined, the community meets for a follow-up evaluation. Members have time to assess their personal action plans, and the community evaluates how well it is doing on performing the tasks and achieving its goals. Goals and tasks are revised as necessary. The key is to remember that this is a process; visible signs, such as increased minority membership, may not happen in six months to a year. However, if each community member is doing the inner reorientation of valuing diversity, the community as a whole will inevitably have healthier and stronger relationships among community members, with people outside the community, and with God.

Although this process may have implications for communities with foreign memberships, these steps to achieving diversity are focused on creating diversity in communities that deal with America's unique problem with diversity. It is almost impossible today not to interact with members of America's visible racial groups (blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Native Americans). Communities that achieve diversity goals will inevitably build better community. Each of us contributes to diversity in some way—if not by primary characteristics (race, age, gender), then by secondary characteristics (religion, personality, emotional makeup). These differences need to be honored and valued in order for personal and communal growth to take place.

At first glance one might be tempted to believe that this sort of process is unnecessary or has already been incorporated into other programs or goals of the community. Some communities may even believe that they are already culturally competent and that they have no need for such a process. This kind of thinking is dangerous and evidences that the community has engaged in some level of denial and/or avoidance. The work of valuing diversity is continuous and requires lifelong education and evaluation. Religious communities have both an urgent need to become diversity-affirming communities and a fantastic opportunity for personal and communal growth. The challenge of building diversity-affirming communities is there for the taking.

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A Consciousness-Raising Retreat

Ellis J. Zimmer, O.F.M. Cap.

Dwelling Place was founded in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on June 20, 1986, as a central-city retreat house. Its primary purpose is to minister to people who normally do not have financial resources to go to retreat houses or other places of spiritual refreshment. No stipend is asked of anyone. Voluntary offerings are accepted.

Even as we plunged into this spiritual ministry for the poor of the central city, social concerns groups from suburban parishes approached us, asking: How can we have a "hands-on" experience of real poverty in larger cities? What can we do to make Jesus' preferential option for the poor (Luke 4:16–22) a reality in our living? They too were conscious of the Latin American bishops' meeting in Puebla, Mexico, in 1979, re-echoing their earlier commitment to the poor in Medellin, Columbia, in 1968—a commitment set forth as a challenge to the universal church: "We affirm the need for conversion of the whole church to a preferential option for the poor, an option aimed at their integral liberation." In a recent article entitled "Option for the Poor: A Reflection" (*America*, January 30, 1988), Thomas Clarke, S.J., adds a further note of urgency to this call, claiming that "theologically, the 'preferential option for the poor' renders the very mystery of salvation. . . . It becomes a way of saying what God has done for us in Christ, as well as naming the essential mission of the Church."

We took up the challenge that social concerns groups posed, developing at Dwelling Place what we call Central City Encounter Retreats. They are directly related to our primary purpose inasmuch as they aim at raising consciousness about the poor. In these retreats participants reflect upon the source of God's gift and call to us as it is pointedly spoken through the life and experience of the poor. The retreats involve meeting directly with poor people and listening to their stories, then processing this experience with the retreat staff. Generous time is saved for private prayer and reflection to further integrate the movement into one's life-journeying.

We have found these retreats to be profoundly enriching for participants, affecting their perceptions about the poor and at times leading to concrete changes in life-style. In January 1991 we scheduled such a retreat for eight seminarians of Sacred Heart Seminary (Hales Corners, Wisconsin), extending it to five days at their request (normally, the retreats last from Friday evening until Sunday noon). The seminarians, all belated vocations, represented dioceses from Indiana, Illinois, North Carolina, Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Canada.

ESSENTIAL RETREAT ELEMENTS

We gathered on the evening of January 5, the vigil of Epiphany. Introductory remarks included

> **Recognizing our sense of helplessness in the presence of enormous societal lethargy regarding the homeless, we also saw the need to resist tendencies to despair for lack of effective solutions**

an explanation of the process of the retreat. The process has four distinct but overlapping stages: (1) plunging into situations and experiences relating to the poor, such as standing in line at a meal program and sitting down as one of the guests; (2) entering into prayerful reflection, asking: What did I observe? What touched me? What new insight into self or the world did I gain? (3) gathering in a group to share that experience and reflection; and (4) coming to a more integrated experience as one hears new insights and connections from other members of the group.

We introduced Bob Winning to the retreatants. Bob has been working at Guest House, an overnight shelter for street persons, for four and a half years. Prior to that he had spent ten years on the streets with a heroin addiction. Alcohol too had controlled his life during that time. "Fear", he said, "is an ever-present spectre—fear of losing everything, fear of living, and fear of dying." Today, much more than ten years ago, he explained, fears are even greater for the homeless. Years ago there was a kind of camaraderie among them. There was less violence in the streets. "Now," he told us, "one often fears even to ask for a cigarette."

Bob has a unique relationship to street people, having been one of them himself. He said, "Don't go to them looking from your nose but from your heart. Most suffer from damaged self-image. They need someone to believe in them so they can believe in themselves." Of his own life, Bob said, "an attitude of gratitude is essential to keep it all hanging together. I need to accept my past, with regrets but with hope." Bob's relaxed way reflected hope. He smiled easily, spoke simply. "By the grace of God," he stated, "I've come through it and found a life." He now tries to help other street people experience the same "miracle." Bob entertained questions from the retreatants and shared details of his conversion.

SUNDAY

On the feast of Epiphany, retreatants were encouraged to attend mass in one of the central city parishes, richly colored with minority groups. At St. Francis Parish they would find a dramatization of the story of the Magi in connection with the mass, along with much Hispanic song. At St. Michael Parish they could experience a multilingual celebration of the Eucharist (in Hmong, Laotian, and English). Those of us who went to St. Michael Parish found the church filled. The environment was warm, welcoming. Mass began with a procession: a crossbearer led dozens of little children through the aisles, helping them feel their importance in this action. English-, Laotian-, and Hmong-speaking participants led people in prayer at various times.

Later, at Dwelling Place, we processed the morning experience. Processing includes listening to each other, sharing, perhaps asking for clarification, giving affirmation, posing questions, and comparing insights with each other. Comments on the two mass celebrations reflected enthusiasm for what was experienced: poor parishes seem to be more open, welcoming, uncritical, warm, and genuine than suburban parishes; a special flavor of freedom and simplicity in the expression of both children and adults was pervasive; every age group was recognized and given some faith impulse in the celebration (e.g., children walking in procession around the church); perhaps parishioners accept ownership of their parish with joy because they feel that they are a vital part of the assembly. We discussed the question, What must change in me to make me a good leader/pastor in a parish, especially in a suburban parish?

An important feature of the retreat was sharing a meal with the homeless. At 5:15 p.m. we went to St. Benedict's meal program to stand in line with the poor. We received food from a long row of distributors who themselves had prepared the food in their homes or parish centers. Children too stood there, passing out eating utensils. They seemed pleased to be part of the sharing. This was not simply a case of the "haves" giving to the "have-nots;" giving and receiving took place on both sides of the table. The poor were silently giving as they received food and walked to a table to enjoy it. The heart of a vital meal program is everyone's awareness of the reciprocity in ministry.

Leaving the meal program, we walked to an adjacent friary to meet and listen to two men who had experienced life on the streets. One of them

brought two boys, Calvin and Keith, ages 12 and 11, respectively. We settled into a circle of chairs, and Bob spoke of his struggle with drugs and his life on the streets. He had had money, friends, and a good job before it all happened. He was enticed into trying drugs. His girlfriend pleaded with him to stop. He insisted that he could handle it. He couldn't. One day he called his employer to say he couldn't come to work. It was downhill from there—weeks, then months, then a couple of years on drugs, on the streets, in overnight shelters, at meal programs.

In describing his drug problem and how he overcame it, he said, "You lose all self-respect. A 'hit' makes you feel good for a while, but inside a deeper feeling of self-contempt, of dread, simmers. You're on the bottom. You have nothing to lose because you have nothing. Somehow you meet the right person who cares. I listened. A glimmer of hope set in. I got to a detox place, slowly pulled away from drugs. I've got a job again." Bob smiled through most of his story. He's grateful for the life change. He has good friends and finds St. Benedict Parish a place of support and encouragement. "I need that kind of support regularly," he confided.

Harvey, more articulate and dramatic, used his hands often to describe his downward journey into drugs. He couldn't find respect or modeling from his father, an alcoholic. He managed to get into recovery through people who cared. Guest House and St. Benedict Parish have been havens for him in his post-drug days. Presently employed at both places, he encourages others to deal with their substance-abuse problems through his own recovery story.

Calvin and Keith, brothers, had been sitting quietly in our circle during the entire session, listening carefully. Calvin then entered the conversation, telling how gangs from high schools threaten middle-school students, get them hooked into their gangs, and quickly teach them how to sell drugs, to whom to sell drugs, and how to protect themselves. He told us how he once had a gun put to his head by a high-schooler, who threatened to kill him if he wouldn't join his gang. Calvin looked at us as though reliving the ordeal and said, "I turned and raced away. It's better to get shot trying to run than just standing there asking for it." He continued with animation to speak of his knowledge of the gangs, describing their ways, telling us the names of gangs and their mottoes, and discussing some of their activities. Keith, we soon discovered, knew as much as his brother. He told us the gangs try to draw fourth- and fifth-graders, even second- and third-graders, into their ranks to learn to sell drugs.

Back at Dwelling Place, we closed our first full retreat day with an evening prayer, reading Isaiah 58:5–7: "This, rather, is the fasting that I wish . . . setting free the oppressed . . . sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless. . . ." Spontaneous prayer included petitions for Calvin and Keith, for Harvey and Bob, and for those now caught in the web of substance abuse. The Sign of Peace, given and received, completed night prayer; we were reminded of the grace of living within a supportive community, away from the loneliness of the streets, protected from having to rely on meal programs and shelters. We are both blessed by this and disturbed at the thought of thousands on the streets tonight, hungry, fearful, rootless.

MONDAY

Morning prayer began our day. With a scripture reading, song, and time for reflection, we girded ourselves for new explorations into the central city's efforts to deal with marginalized persons: "A people living in darkness has seen a great light. On those who inhabit a land overshadowed by death, light has arisen. . . ." (Matt. 4:15–17). Our closing prayer was this: "Open our hearts today, gracious God, to the sounds around us, within us, crying for a hearing in behalf of those Jesus ever searched out in his ministry: the marginalized, the poor, the outcasts, the 'untouchables' of society. Amen."

In the morning we visited Guest House. This overnight shelter's primary purpose is to provide temporary nighttime emergency shelter for homeless men and women and to respond to their immediate needs for food, clothing, showering, and medicine. Rachel Jovi spoke to our group, explaining the beginnings of Guest House and its present role in the central city, with its mushrooming numbers of homeless. It provides shelter and support services to 80 men and women each night. Last year it had to turn away almost 3,000 men and women. The average age of the guests is 34 years. One-third have mental health problems; one-third have alcohol or drug problems. On any night in Milwaukee, 1,500 to 2,000 persons are homeless, but the city's shelters can serve only 550 to 600 persons.

At 2:30 p.m. we gathered to process the morning's activity. We expressed feelings of frustration and powerlessness in the face of the spectre of increasing homelessness across the nation. Permanent, affordable housing is central to the problem. Shelters do not address that issue. Institutionalizing the homeless is not an adequate answer. The answer needs to come from people and organizations that can provide affordable housing. Recognizing our frustrations, our sense of helplessness in the presence of enormous societal lethargy regarding the homeless, we also saw the need to resist tendencies to despair for lack of effective solutions.

A presentation and discussion of "Spiritual Growth and the Option for the Poor" by Albert Nolan, O.P. (*Church*, Spring 1985), helped to con-

textualize our experience. He explains that the "spiritual development we can go through in our service to the poor [has] stages . . . very much [like] the stages of prayer . . . crisis, dark nights and light." He calls the first stage compassion, resulting from information about the poor and exposure to them. This experience tends to cause one to begin to simplify one's life-style. The second stage, called structural change, begins with a gradual discovery that poverty results directly from political and economic structures. This leads to indignation against these policies and those who defend them, along with a desire to work for social change at the structural level as well as to do relief work for the poor. In the third stage one attains humility in serving the poor, through the discovery that the poor must and will save themselves. One experiences the shock of recognizing the need to learn from the wisdom of the poor. This is a critical point, a "conversion point," if one is open to it. The fourth stage is a movement toward solidarity, away from the terms *we* and *they*. We have all chosen to be on the same side against oppression. It is a matter of solidarity with God's own cause of justice, in Jesus Christ.

Father Thomas Volkert, pastor of Thomas Aquinas Parish, spent the evening at Dwelling Place, telling retreatants how the central city's problems inexorably drew him into collaborative actions with other churches and community groups. Parishioners had moved out as minorities had moved in. Where was the faith? What could be done? These questions had moved Volkert to become involved in a redevelopment program called L.A.N.D. (Lisbon Avenue Neighborhood Development) within his parish boundaries. The L.A.N.D. project dealt with three issues critical to the community's survival and growth: (1) decent housing, (2) jobs (income), and (3) tools to deal with particular issues (e.g., drug trafficking). It drew him into a greater leadership role in the larger community, and he encouraged parishioners to cooperate with the project.

Discussion followed Volkert's presentation, revolving around the pastor's place in the community as a leader in roles of enabling, animating, and (as Volkert appeared to be doing) helping to envision future action, and gathering the parish community to discuss and to embrace more fully its commitment to respond creatively to the neighborhood's needs.

Evening prayer helped us to gather the day's meaning and challenged us with the words of Ezekiel (36:24–28): "I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts." Our closing prayer was this: "May the closing moments of this day open our hearts, Lord, to a new understanding of service, softening insensitivity and callousness so our hearts become mal-

leable, capable of a new depth of acceptance and love. Amen."

TUESDAY

The retreatants remained at Dwelling Place to reflect upon the issue of racism. Examining racist models is a way of learning better who we are, who others are, and what keeps us apart in society. All the retreatants were white Americans. We discussed such terms as *cultural arrogance*—the uplifting of Anglo-American (white European) life-styles and values so that racial and ethnic groups are defined by Anglo-American standards; *institutional racism*—policies and practices of basic institutions (e.g., businesses, health care and educational institutions, government and church bodies) that result in benefits to people of one race at the expense of those of other races; *racism*—any attitude, action, or institutional practice that subordinates people because of their color (A simple definition is "power + prejudice = racism"); and *prejudice*—attitudes or opinions, especially of a hostile nature, based on prejudgment and insufficient information about a group of people.

We reflected upon the above terms by examining statements that helped us to understand and admit "white privilege" (e.g., "I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed"; "I can be pretty sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of my race.") Such statements were read and brought to private prayer with a view to scripture texts such as Rom. 15:1–7, I Cor. 1:26–31, and Gal. 3:26–28. The focus question for this reflection was, "What in my personal thinking, attitude, and behaviors is out of line with the gospel, and what do I feel called to change?"

Before the 4:30 celebration of the Eucharist began, we gathered the retreatants, presented them with pieces of clay of various colors, and asked them to consider this question: What do I feel I need from other cultures to be whole and to be Christian? After some reflection, they were to mold the clay into an image or symbol describing their response to the question, and bring that clay symbol to the Eucharist. A shared homily followed the readings, during which each participant presented his clay creation with some explanation and placed it at the foot of the altar as an offering. Eyeglasses with crosses on them symbolized the pain involved in seeing the truth and embracing it. An ear symbolized another participant's need to become sensitized not only to giving to those in need but also, more important, to be prepared to receive from them gifts of wisdom that no others could give. A heart, an eye, a rose, a bridge, and other symbols were presented, each with its own special meaning.

The evening program involved a process for deepening cultural awareness and experience.

Members of Hispanic, African-American, and Native American ethnicity were invited to assist in this process. The retreatants and guests were divided into groups of two, with a mix of race and color, and directed to share with their partners the following questions: What is great about being black, white, Native American, Hispanic? What is hard about being black, white, Native American, Hispanic in this society? When have you given in to racism or prejudice? When have you fought against racism or prejudice?

A full group discussion followed. Vernetta: "It's hard not to respond to racial overtones, slurs, assumptions in conversation. When I've heard enough, I feel compelled to share with the person that his or her remark or behavior is inaccurate or inappropriate. And sometimes I say more than that, in frustration." Gail: "The older I get, the less I want to 'think' black. I just want to be me. I don't want to get up in the morning and say, 'Yep, black again!' No, I just want to be me." Jesse (tears streaming down her cheeks): "I get so tired of working in the atmosphere of subtle unacceptance. I just try to raise my children in peace, teaching them principles of justice and equality." Joe, with a disarming smile, spoke of the strength and significance of the newly founded Congregation of the Great Spirit (parish for Native Americans) and heartily invited everyone to participate in its Sunday Eucharist. John: "I felt good about being white because of all its opportunities. But suddenly I realized that is what was also hard about being white, for my opportunities were not matched by minority groups. I felt ashamed." Further sharing followed over coffee.

WEDNESDAY

The final full day of retreat began with a prayer for unity (Eph. 2:14–22): "It is He who is our peace, and who made the two of us one by breaking down the barriers of hostility that kept us apart." After private reflection and shared petitions, we joined in this prayer: "Broaden our vision, Lord, and sculpture our intent in this new day to see as you saw, to respond as you responded to every person in need. May we not lack the humor to smile, the compassion to weep with those we meet, in a way that best serves and builds up your Kingdom."

Father Alan Veik, a Capuchin, gave the morning presentation to the retreatants. He is the founder of the Benedict Institute for Urban Ministry, which provides participants with pastoral work among the poor in jail, in street ministry, and in alternative health care programs. Veik focused most of his comments on the jail ministry, in which he has worked for fifteen years. But first he spoke of his own struggle in dealing with the marginalized. While attending Loyola University in Chicago, he had to walk through the city's skid row, and he was

We have all chosen to be on the same side against oppression

affected by the environment—what he saw, heard, smelled. In a moment of largesse of spirit, Veik recalled, he decided he would do something—perhaps "lend an ear" to those who called for help. A man approached him, asking for money. Veik was reluctant to give the man that kind of help. Suddenly they both saw a man stumbling along, disheveled, with his pants unzipped. The man next to Veik immediately went to the man, zipped up his pants, helped him find a place to sit, and gave him fifty cents. Veik found those small acts of mercy thundering against his own unwillingness to be more open to simple needs. "That incident exposed my own intent to keep the poor at a distance," he confessed.

Entering the jail ministry in 1975, Veik, influenced by the Catholic Worker philosophy, found himself looking for God in all his experiences, struggling with scripture and bringing it to his work with street people and in the jail. Prisoners in overcrowded jail cells and visitors in St. Benedict driveways and parlors, driven by drugs, alcohol, and mental illness, were the newly perceived "ground" of God's revealing Presence for him. "Jail is high-powered sin and high-powered grace," Veik told us. "God—in Jesus—intervenes in this kind of place. My survival came from mining the site of the area." Props aren't needed. "What is needed is what is there when we arrive at the site of ministry. Mining the site of the area," Veik repeated, "is an invitation to put away prejudices, cultural conditions, and to open to a purer vision of what is before you."

In the early afternoon we drove to Casa Maria, a Catholic Worker dwelling huddled in quiet anonymity among blocks of wood-frame houses. We

entered amid scampering children; their mothers relaxed near the front door, chatting. This was their home until another could be found for them.

Don Timmerman introduced the retreatants to the Catholic Worker philosophy by speaking of two basic approaches to ministry and to life. One is the approach of nonviolence, through activity that takes away the violence you see happening around you. It includes a willingness even to suffer arrest for nonviolent protests in behalf of justice. The second approach is one of gentle personalism— treating all individuals, both enemies and friends, as persons at all times, with all of their uniqueness. It is "seeing each person as Christ Himself. Such a philosophy," Timmerman explained, "is simply putting into practice what we see Christ talking about in the gospels—for example, the Beatitudes." His own gentleness belied an inner strength that had seen him through being arrested for nonviolent actions against unjust conditions.

In a later afternoon discussion of the talks by Veik and Timmerman, some retreatants took exception to the idea of civil disobedience as a proper approach, even in the face of injustice. It was upsetting to their notion that authority sometimes must be obeyed for the protection of the common good. They had been moved by Veik's description of "mining the site of the area" (the county jail), and spoke with admiration of Timmerman's explanation of the beatitudinal principle of "gentle personalism," invoked and lived out by Catholic Worker members. Their ready identification with the marginalized mirrors their fidelity to the spirit of the early associates of Dorothy Day, foundress of the Catholic Worker movement.

THURSDAY

The final hours of retreat were given to processing, reflection, and written evaluations. The written comments highlighted the following: visiting various shelters and listening to those who give much to the homeless; "hands-on" experiences at places where the poor gather; dialogues with each other, especially at the Eucharist, and with outside groups; eating at the meal program with the poor; and mining the expertise of many speakers. Several participants suggested that a day or two be added to the retreat to help maintain the retreatants' spiritual and emotional balance and to allow fuller assimilation of the experience.

Our final gathering was for a late-morning celebration of the Eucharist. A spirited rendition of "City of God" (Daniel Schutte) bespoke hope, even excitement: "Awake from your slumber! Arise from your sleep! A new day is dawning for all those who weep. . . . Let us build the city of God; may our tears be turned into dancing! For the Lord, our Light and our Love, has turned the night into day!" In a shared homily, the retreatants expressed their thoughts and feelings in response to a question given them earlier in the morning: In the light of all I have experienced, prayed about, what do I feel God is asking me to change in regard to my ways of thinking, my attitudes, my life-style, my ministry? The responses varied. Some examples: "I think that God is asking me not to necessarily be set in all my ways." "After these experiences, I feel more determined than ever to approach my field placements without a planned scenario. The people I work with are ministering as much to me as I am to them. By having a planned scenario, I could be setting up roadblocks [against] a truly spiritual experience." "I plan to volunteer to work at the St. Benedict meal program or at a shelter for the homeless one night per month." "I don't know exactly the form of ministry God is calling me to at this time, but new seeds of discernment have been planted during this retreat."

New seeds of discernment can be a happy consequence of living attentively with the poor—a favored gospel soil offering new understanding, enrichment, and empowerment. It is a natural basis for individual and collective renewal. Genuine renewal involves substantial, even radical, changes in living. Retreats that succeed in raising consciousness thoughtfully and persuasively can facilitate such renewal. Perhaps Central City Retreat Encounters have a special potential for consciously integrating life and spirituality (which are, at bottom, already the same) and initiating a conversion process that will ignite a fire in the belly.

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Recovering Alcoholics as Religious Candidates

Gerard H. Chylko, C.Ss.R., J.C.L.

The article by Anne Graham entitled "From Twelve-Step Program to Formation" (HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, Fall 1991), piqued my interest, since it touched on issues I myself had to face over the past six years, while I was involved in formation. During that time I served as the assistant director of novices for my community. My present ministry involves directing retreats for men and women who are recovering through twelve-step programs.

When the twelve steps first appeared more than fifty years ago, they were presented as the "suggested program of recovery for men and women suffering from the illness of alcoholism." Recently, however, more and more people are finding that the twelve steps can be used not only as a program of recovery from addiction but also as a path to true spiritual growth by anyone struggling to deepen his or her life of faith. Part of the reason for this, as Graham points out, is that "the twelve steps are beyond and beneath beliefs and doctrines, rules and regulations, touching the very essence of life."

However, with candidates coming from a lived experience of the twelve steps, Graham writes that she feels "ambivalence." She goes on to explain:

On the one hand I respect and honor and desire to underline what I know others have found to be vital for approaching life/Life. . . . On the other hand . . . I desire to open such people to the spiritual tradition of my own community's charism, indicating how and where what they are saying in twelve-step terms has

been said yet another way by our religious founder in our rule.

When reading this, I could not understand what was the source of her sense of ambivalence. My first impression would be that the two spiritualities (that of the twelve steps and that of the religious charism) would be seen as complementary to each other, and certainly not dichotomous.

Graham writes that while expressing trust in the "authenticity of the twelve-step approach," as well as "enthusiasm for [her] own charism," which would lead her to draw parallels and even link the twelve-step approach to her community's charism, she is prevented from doing this spontaneously with twelve-step candidates. She asks, "What makes the twelve steps an experience apart? Why do I feel I have no right to question it or compare it with other paths of conversion?"

In this article I hope to respond to some of the questions raised by Graham. However, while there are many self-help groups that practice the twelve steps, and while candidates to religious life can come from any of them, I will restrict my comments to those candidates who are members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

NATURE OF ALCOHOLISM AND ADDICTION

An alcoholic is a person who is not only psychologically addicted to the drug ethyl alcohol, but

physically addicted as well. The physical addiction is such that when alcohol consumption ceases, the person experiences severe physical withdrawal symptoms (alcohol being a toxic substance, the withdrawal process is called detoxification). The psychological addiction is such that even after the physical withdrawal from alcohol has taken place, there remains a greater or lesser compulsion to return to the drug as a way of handling not only stress and pain but even excitement and joy.

Alcoholism is a chronic, progressive illness. For the recovering alcoholic, the physical addiction will not be activated as long as he or she refrains from ingesting alcohol. However, even while maintaining physical abstinence, the psychological addiction remains a potential danger for the recovering alcoholic. For this reason, Alcoholics Anonymous advises the alcoholic to "keep one's memory green," to "stay teachable," and to "continue to work one's program" on a daily basis.

The genius of Alcoholics Anonymous is that recovery from both the physical and psychological addiction is possible as long as the person adheres to the twelve-step program. As the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* states, "The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it. . . . We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition."

The chronic, progressive, and potentially fatal illness of alcoholism provides an example of the Scholastic principle of the "excluded middle": one cannot be just a little bit alcoholic; either one is or one isn't. If left untreated, the disease will be fatal. Thus the recovering alcoholic's statement "If I drink, I will die" is true, and it remains true whether the individual began recovery at the late, middle, or early stages of the disease. In fact, as a result of the information and education available about alcoholism today, more people are entering recovery at the middle or even early stages of their illness. A person need not be "at death's door" to be struck with the full impact of the disease.

ADMISSION OF ALCOHOLISM

I have included the foregoing information on the nature of alcoholism because of certain questions that Graham asks in her article:

> How does the director ascertain whether for this applicant the statement ("If I drink, I will die") is literally true, chemically proven? Does the director assume that a candidate's assessment of his or her symptoms is accurate, or is there room to explore and perhaps question how this conclusion was reached by the candidate?

The admission of being an alcoholic, along with the decision to seek help and recovery, usually comes only after an experience of great pain and anguish, after the person's denial has been shattered. Frequently, some process of intervention is necessary to effect this. The words "I am an alcoholic; I need help," when first spoken, are uttered with a sense of defeat; the joy of recovery comes later. So the person who identifies himself or herself with the words "I am an alcoholic" can be trusted to be making an accurate statement.

However, trusting the accuracy of this statement does not automatically rule out exploring or questioning how this conclusion was reached. In fact, my experience has been that recovering alcoholics are usually quite willing to share their story. Indeed, part of the injunction to "carry the message" to others, which is an integral part of the twelve steps, involves having recovering alcoholics tell "what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now."

AN ONGOING RECOVERY

Graham raises other questions in her article:

> What does a director do if and when he or she finds statements of boundaries, calls for exceptions, requests for exemptions . . . ? How does the director [respond to] . . . a candidate's . . . appraisal of what he or she needs in terms of personal response and rhythm of life?

While I am not entirely clear about what Graham is referring to, I am moved by her questions to offer some comments about the ongoing recovery program of the alcoholic candidate.

Recovering alcoholics often speak about the need to "work one's program." This refers not only to continued abstinence from alcohol and practice of the twelve steps on a daily basis but also to regular attendance at AA meetings. A director may wonder what constitutes regular attendance. After talking to people in AA, I have come to understand regular attendance to mean weekly attendance. How many meetings per week? The answer usually given is, "As many as it takes." For the newcomer to AA (i.e., a person with less than one year of sobriety), regular attendance may well have to be daily. For persons with more than one year of sobriety, regular attendance may mean anything from one to seven meetings a week. However, as people grow in sobriety, they usually establish a pattern of attending AA meetings. For example, a person may attend two or three meetings every week as a regular program, but then increase the number of meetings during times of stress or decrease the number of meetings when other obligations arise.

In most areas of the country, AA meetings are held frequently during the week, even daily, and at various times of day. Attendance at such meetings by a candidate could easily fit into most programs of formation and would not constitute, in my opin-

ion, a serious exception to or exemption from the regular order of a formation program.

Another important aspect of "working the program" is for the recovering alcoholic to maintain regular contact with his or her AA sponsor. A sponsor acts as a personal guide to working the twelve steps, as well as someone to whom one turns for advice on recovery issues. A sponsor is comparable, though not necessarily identical, to a spiritual director.

ASSESSING CANDIDATE'S READINESS

Other questions raised by Graham include the following:

> Why do I feel I have no right to question [twelve-step spirituality] or to compare it with other paths of conversion? . . . What constitutes . . . readiness for twelve-step applicants to join, to move in with, to opt to create community with members of the religious group?

These questions, while separate, are not unrelated. Indeed, how a twelve-step applicant responds to questions about his or her spirituality may provide the director with information about the candidate's readiness to join a particular institute.

For example, concerning the director's right to question a candidate about his or her practice of twelve-step spirituality, I am inclined to apply the words of St. Paul: "Test everything; hold fast to what is good" (1 Thes. 5:21).

In my opinion the authenticity of a spirituality is determined only through scrutiny. By the same token, a spirituality that resists investigation, that is threatened by questions, or that defies explanation is suspect. Of course, such criteria apply not only to the spirituality of the twelve steps but also to any other spirituality and, indeed, any religious charism. When using the word *spirituality* in this context, I mean the lived experience of that spirituality. Any spirituality or religious charism can look good on paper, but a spirituality cannot remain theoretical. The reality of a spirituality is encountered in those who live it. In other words, as a twelve-step slogan puts it, "It's not enough to talk the talk; you also have to walk the walk."

Therefore, the ability and willingness of a candidate to explain his or her practice of twelve-step spirituality can be one way of discerning that person's readiness to join a particular religious institute. And if the candidate can draw parallels between the spirituality he or she is already living (the spirituality of the twelve steps) with the spirituality he or she hopes to assimilate (the charism of the religious institute), this evidences a flexibility and openness that would make joining the group that much easier.

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PROBLEMS IN FORMATION

Toward the end of her article, Graham writes that "twelve-step spirituality can cause problems in formation programs, just as it can in families." I disagree with this strongly. What causes problems in formation programs and other religious communities and in families are those members who are active alcoholics and addicts, as well as those suffering from some form of codependency or other dysfunction. My experience has shown the Twelve Steps to be a program of recovery, not a cause of problems.

Graham also writes that "formation personnel cannot continue to treat twelve-step spirituality and its followers as unapproachably sacred, nor can they continue to view themselves as iconoclasts." I would certainly agree with this. After all, as Christians with a firm belief in an incarnational God, we hold that even the most sacred is at the same time the most approachable and accessible. Again, the words of Paul are useful: "Test everything; hold fast to what is good."

Finally, Graham suggests that "formation personnel . . . talk about the issues of addiction and the twelve-step response." I couldn't agree more. However, I disagree that such discussions should take place, as she suggests, "without representatives of twelve-step programs." For some reason, she believes that the presence of such representatives "would inhibit open and spontaneous brainstorming." I would think that the presence of AA

members at these discussions, at least initially, could help clarify areas of misunderstanding or misinformation that may exist. In fact, in many places AA groups have a special service board that includes a committee devoted to "cooperation with the professional community." The members of this committee make themselves available to professional groups precisely to discuss what AA is, what it isn't, and how the AA program works. Inviting this committee to a meeting with formation personnel could be of great benefit to all.

Undoubtedly, there should be further discussion of the issues surrounding candidates from twelve-step programs in formation. May the questions and responses continue to the benefit of all.

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Colors Make Workplace More Productive

Researchers have found that exposing people to certain colors affects how they think, behave, and work. The use of particular colors has been shown to accelerate learning, retention, and recall by up to 78 percent and to increase motivation and participation by up to 80 percent. Carlton Wagner, director of the Wagner Institute for Color Research, observes that "color plays a crucial role in the way we feel and the way we work—much more than people think. Unfortunately, so many more people work in offices that were decorated from a decorative sense instead of a productivity sense. As a result, they're not as productive as they could be."

Wagner, an internationally known color consultant to corporations, says research shows that each color has a best and a worst use in the workplace. Through proper choice, according to Wagner, "you can color your office . . . more productive and happier."

White is the most popular color in office environments—and one of the worst. "White works against people more than they realize," warns Wagner. "It causes the eye to shut down a bit, resulting in unconscious squinting, increased fatigue and the employee not being able to get as much information as normally."

Yellow contributes to anxiety, loss of temper, nervousness, and minor muscle movement. Research reveals that babies cry more in yellow rooms, and drivers of yellow cars are more likely to get angry in traffic. On the other hand, yellow is regarded by Wagner as "good in cases where you want to keep the tension up, when anxiety is your friend—like in a newsroom or in a sales situation when everyone competes against everyone else."

Green is comforting to most people; it evokes peacefulness and serenity, and it encourages long-term focus. "It helps reduce the stress of moving to a new home or school," observes Wagner.

Blue is a relaxing color; it causes the brain to secrete tranquilizing hormones. Blue encourages fantasizing and thus can be either beneficial or harmful, depending on what type of business you are in. Wagner advises, "If your business relies on being creative, such as writing or advertising, then painting a room blue would

bring you excellent results. However, on a production line or anywhere where there isn't room for daydreams, stay away from blue." Research shows that eating food off a blue plate decreases appetite; so does installing a blue light in your refrigerator.

Pink has a calming effect, particularly among those prone to anger. It has recently become a popular color choice in prisons. Yellow-based pinks, such as apricot and peach, appeal to men, but blue-based pinks, such as the color of bubblegum, are more attractive to women. Decorate with pink, therefore, and you'll find that you please only half of the people.

Orange is frequently used in fast-food restaurants because it indicates accessibility, inexpensiveness, and informality. It is the most effective color to use when you are announcing a garage sale. But it has little impact on a worker's productivity.

Red stimulates the flow of adrenaline, resulting in faster pulse, increased blood pressure, and higher energy levels. Wagner regards it as "a dangerous color, because you don't want to keep that level of energy up for too long." He adds, "It's a bad color for long-term work because it makes time pass more slowly, which is why it's a popular color in bars, restaurants and casinos."

Brown is a good color to use when you want people to feel relaxed and comfortable. Reporters and counselors are more likely to get people to talk freely by wearing brown; its informality encourages openness.

Purple shades tend to slow muscular response and can calm nerves by controlling pituitary and pineal functions. Violet is even more effective than blue for appetite control. Investigations performed at the Biosocial Research Institute in Tacoma, Washington, find that dieters are most successful when they dine in purple rooms.

Wagner recommends gray colors as probably best for decorating one's workplace, since they "don't intrude or attract attention." Beige and other neutral tints are also very conducive to productivity. Wagner generalizes, "The more you attract your eye to the background, the less you concentrate on your work. People work best in an environment that's light but not white."

Anger in the House of Formation

James Osendorf, C.M.

We experience anger in ourselves and in our candidates and novices at every level of formation, and many times it leaves us feeling frightened, numb, fuming, or just plain bewildered. In this article I would like to trace some of the dynamics of anger and to reflect upon what I have learned from my relationships with our candidates.

A few weeks ago I was throwing some trash away and noticed that someone—obviously, one of the candidates—had thrown away some aluminum cans. I was furious. How could he do such a thing? They all know that we recycle each and every aluminum can, as well as most of our plastic, newspaper, and glass. We even water our plants with our gray water—we are environmentally aware! Yet one of the candidates had deliberately thrown away several aluminum cans. Was he trying to get back at me for something? Was this a case of deliberate passive aggression? Or was it just plain carelessness? Had everything we agreed to in our house plan gone down the drain? The more I thought about it, the angrier I became.

Ironically, the smallest things that happen to us sometimes get us the most angry. But the dynamics of anger over small issues and sizable ones are very similar. The best definition of anger that I have discovered is found in Robert Solomon's book *The Passions*. Solomon defines anger as a prereflective judgment of personal offense. And that judgment of offense very often involves feelings of self-worth and self-identity. This definition reflects the very close connection between the emotional and rational parts of who we are. Many people visualize emotion and intellect as being on opposite ends of a continuum. I propose that they mesh together, like the interlaced fingers of our two hands: both hands are distinct, yet they are interrelated.

When I looked down into the trash can and saw those aluminum cans, I was personally offended. As I reflected about it later—because sometimes it takes a while to calm down from the feeling of anger—I realized that when I saw those cans, I instantly judged that one of the candidates had discarded them and that he had done it on purpose. But there was more. What also flashed into my mind was how this might look to the provincial or to other professed members of the community if they were to see it. What would they think of me? Would they think I was doing a poor job as director of our house of formation? My identity as director was being called into question, was being attacked. My anger was part of my defense response to help protect me from the attack. That experience of anger was about much more than someone throwing an aluminum can away. And the fuller meaning of anger becomes available to us only when we reflect about the experience and decide to learn something about ourselves and others. That, in short, is what I have learned to do with my candidates. I don't do it each and every time I experience

anger, but when I judge that it is necessary—especially when I notice that I am becoming resentful—we sit down together and examine our emotions. We try to dig a little deeper than the immediate issue or problem; we attempt to disclose some of the deeper movements within us.

The judgment that gives rise to anger is really several judgments that one makes simultaneously and spontaneously. In my case I judged that a candidate was the perpetrator; that the action was deliberate, and possibly an act of revenge for something I had done; that the situation would affect how others evaluated my worth as a director; that I was not doing my job well enough; that the action could have been avoided by the candidate, who should have known better. I probably made additional judgments of which I am still not aware. As is quite evident, anger is generated by how we interpret events in our lives. If we interpret that those events were done to attack us (or another) personally, and if they could have been avoided, and if somehow our self-esteem or identity has been diminished, we will be angry. We are intricate, complex people; just trying to unravel one seemingly insignificant incident can verify that. I think that part of the formation process is to model and encourage the freedom to express some of the mystery of our own complexity, especially when it is messy and awkward.

ANGER IS NECESSARY

We need our anger. Anger protects and restores our status as persons. It lets us know that we have been offended, and when we express our anger, it lets others know that they are doing something objectionable—that they have hurt us and that we aren't going to let them walk all over us. We have boundaries and limits, and our anger gives us the personal power to stop the offense. Anger regulates our social relationships by letting others know that they have gone too far and that we may retaliate if they don't change their ways (when a lion roars, people move back). Even national groups like M.A.D.D. (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) use acronyms that describe the emotion of anger and what it can do if it is used constructively.

Sometimes our judgments are incorrect. Once, when I was teaching in the seminary, I had to interview several students concerning their yearly evaluation. I put a list on my door, asked them to sign up, and went off to class. Two hours later I decided to check the list. It was gone. I was furious. How dare they do this to me, I fumed. An hour or so later, while cleaning my room, I found the list—I had absentmindedly taken it down myself when I had returned from class. All I could do was laugh at how absurd the whole situation had been. I had used so much emotional energy imagining who had taken the list and why. The judgment of offense was

gone. I was no longer angry, even though the feeling of anger did continue for a good twenty minutes or so, since it took some time for my adrenaline to stop flowing.

At times further information moves us to change our judgments. Sometimes we intentionally choose to change our judgments of offense: maybe the offender had a bad day; maybe he or she just forgot or was preoccupied. At other times, however, we realize that our judgments were correct, and we accept our anger as justified and righteous.

This understanding of anger differs dramatically from the popularized Freudian hydraulic model of anger. According to that model, our conflicting unconscious drives give rise to an energy buildup within us—a reservoir of anger, so to speak. When the reservoir is full, it needs to be discharged by ventilation. This has given rise to a popular "let it all out" (catharsis) strategy for seeking relief from anger. The irony is that often we feel worse after venting angry feelings at someone. Sometimes the ventilation strategy is the only one that works. My experience in formation, however, indicates that exploding in anger rarely works and often makes things worse. There are other, more holistic strategies that can help us cope with our anger.

CONSTRUCTIVE ANGER STRATEGIES

When I have exploded at one of my candidates I usually take some time—often a day or two—to calm down and to reflect about the incident. Then the candidate and I get together and discuss the incident. Anger is not uncontrollable, and we are not slaves to our unconscious. Anger is not this thing inside of us, apart from us, that dictates how we respond. We can and must take responsibility for the way we feel, for the emotion that we experience inside, and decide what we want to do about it. That is why I talk about anger strategies. I recommend the following method for reconciling anger:

1. *Become aware of your angry feelings.* Don't try to pretend that the feelings are not there; try not to mask or deny the feelings. Listening to the language of our bodies (changes in pulse, muscle tension, breathing) often helps us realize what we are feeling. It sounds easy, but many find it difficult to do. Many of us were taught—either directly or indirectly—that some of our emotions were wrong or inappropriate. Many of us have learned to mask our emotions; for instance, sometimes anger masks other emotions, such as lust or fear, that we do not allow ourselves to recognize. Sometimes there is confusion between what we ought to feel and what we do feel.

2. *Interpret and evaluate the underlying source of the anger.* The focus here is on the person who is angry, not the person who is the object of the anger. You might ask the following questions: What was

the anger all about? What was the judgment you made that brought about the anger? What part of yourself felt/feels attacked or in danger? How have you been personally offended? How has your self-esteem or self-identity been threatened? The important thing is not to blame someone else for the way you feel.

3. *Accept responsibility for your anger and take appropriate action.* That is, choose a strategy that will produce a healthy result. For instance, in one situation it may be appropriate to "tell off" the offender, while in another it may be best to keep silent, or to sit for a while and cool off and then calmly share your feelings with the person, or to talk the situation over with a trusted friend, or to just watch a funny movie. Sometimes it is an attitude that needs to be changed; at other times it is a behavior. Learn from your experiences: Which anger responses/strategies have worked for you in the past, and which haven't?

4. *If you want to and it is possible, seek forgiveness.* Forgiveness is often needed for the sake of the relationship. Even if the other person doesn't deserve our forgiveness, we need it for ourselves. If we hold on to our anger, it can turn into resentment, and that is often self-destructive. The challenge is to reach beyond anger and pain (not to deny them) to claim your legitimate power and dignity as a person, while also acknowledging your weakness and limits. Being in a good relationship demands a gentleness and openness to forgive and to be forgiven—to let go of stubborn pride and to welcome, or to be welcomed back into, relationship. Bring the anger to prayer. Often prayer has a wonderful way of helping us see the truth of the situation, of calming us down and centering us so that we can see a wider reality.

"I-MESSAGES" HELPFUL

In formation we fall into many of the communication traps that everyone else falls into. It doesn't help, for instance, to focus on who is to blame (if the milk is already spilled, you can't unspill it). The hurt has already been done. Now the focus needs to be on understanding, forgiveness, and reconciliation. It helps to use "I-messages," which avoid verbal aggression. In other words, report your anger (I am mad at you; I feel attacked). Share yourself, not the topic. It doesn't help to use absolutes (never, always, every time). Neither is it helpful to blame third parties (the provincial, or another novice or candidate or professed religious). I think that all of us can learn how to deal with our anger in growth-producing ways. If you make a

mistake, learn from it and move on with your life. And don't be afraid to learn strategies that others have found to be helpful and healthful.

In dealing with my own anger and the anger of my candidates, I try to keep in mind that many of us come from dysfunctional families. As a result of our upbringing, many of us avoid our emotions or believe that our emotions are wrong or bad. At an early age many of us learned to hide our emotions because they just made things worse—and anger was one of the most disruptive. When someone got angry, someone got hit or hurt. We came to believe that emotions were the immediate cause of behavior and therefore had to be ignored or buried inside us because they were so dangerous. Like many of us, our novices and candidates react to anger in different ways. Some avoid or deny the emotion; they employ behavior patterns that were learned in childhood but that no longer work for them as adults. Directors need to model more functional responses. One way of doing that is to share honestly our own struggles and mistakes, the difficulties we have with identity and self-esteem; to be the first to seek reconciliation, to apologize, to ask forgiveness, or to confront a situation. Sometimes I am able to catch myself in midsentence during an angry response and to begin asking myself what the offense was all about, often to the utter amazement of my candidates. They know that I am struggling, like them, to be the best person that I can be. At times that will look rather pleasing, and at other times it will look really messy. It is all right to make a mistake when dealing with anger. Learn from it and move on with your life.

RECOMMENDED READING

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Governance in Religious Congregations

Catherine M. Harmer, M.M.S., Ph.D.

Governance and government structures have been topics of intense concern over the years since renewal began for most congregations of women religious and for some men's groups. Initially, much of the concern was a reaction to years, sometimes generations, of authoritarian leadership. Whether benign or harsh, the nature of the authoritarian approach led to a strong rejection of it in the years following Vatican II.

In its document on the church, that council had emphasized collegiality and the importance of participation. The first to pick up on these ideas and begin to apply them to their own structures were women religious. It is not an accident that at the same time that Vatican II was speaking to collegiality, mainly in terms of the way bishops were to interact with the Vatican, women religious, especially in the United States, were immersed in a society that was looking at participation on many fronts.

The years prior to Vatican II had witnessed the rise of the black power movement, the civil rights movement, and the women's movement. In each case, what was being addressed was the basic principle that people have a right to influence aspects of society and government that affect them. Religious women in the United States and elsewhere looked back on years in which decisions that affected their lives and work were made by people who were not there with them. In some cases the decisions were made harshly and were communicated in impersonal ways.

During the 1950s many American religious benefited by the Sister Formation Movement. Some went on to earn college and graduate degrees, often in nonsectarian universities. They came into contact with many people, movements, and theories that helped to open the doors and windows of religious life. In some cases, the most innovative people in congregations were the women in charge of the formation programs in their groups. They met at national meetings and regional meetings, and the ferment of change was all around them.

Initially, what many groups were primarily interested in was a change in specific ways of functioning, especially in how decisions were made. What occurred over the first years was a wave of experimentation in structural change without sufficient attention to the underlying principles. As people became more aware, some discovered that they had changed the bits and pieces of how they did things, but the principles had not changed; others found that they had changed the principles, and their old ways of doing things did not fit the new principles.

The purpose of this article is to look at two models of governance and their principles, particularly as they function in religious life. In subse-

quent articles, I will examine the specific structures and how they are affected by shifts in model and principles.

TWO MODELS OF GOVERNANCE

The model of governance that has been used by the vast majority of religious congregations over the centuries is the hierarchical model. The standard organizational chart seen in schools, hospitals, businesses and the military is a picture of that model and the interrelationships within it. The hierarchical model has its own principles, from which certain actions and modes of behavior flow. It is a model that works very well in certain settings and for certain kinds of groups.

What has emerged over the past twenty-five years is a model that is actually very old—indeed, ancient. It is often called the organic model, which is a good name, since it is based on the idea of a "living" group—one that is in the process of developing. Distinctive actions and modes of behavior are called forth by its principles, which are different from those of the hierarchical model. The organic model also works very well in certain settings and for certain kinds of groups.

It has become fashionable to denigrate the hierarchical model and to canonize the organic model. The same question must be asked in regard to each: Is it being used appropriately? It is important to recognize that each model is a valid form of governance. The key is the fit to the situation and the group. This is best assessed through an analysis of the assumptional bases of the model, its principles, and the nature of the group using it. It is my contention that the hierarchical model is no longer appropriate in religious life; that its assumptions and principles do not fit the situations and groups in religious life today. This conviction comes out of twenty years of working as a consultant to religious congregations, and of reading about and studying the two models extensively. The hierarchical model is inappropriate to a number of other institutions as well, but this article will focus on religious life.

THE ASSUMPTIONAL BASES

The hierarchical model was created by Julius Caesar, who developed it to manage the Roman army. Julius Caesar was a very fearful man, and with good reason—few emperors in his day died of old age. The assumptions on which the model rests are not much different today than they were in his time.

First, the model assumed that most people were not educated and that therefore a small elite of well-educated *men* were the only ones who could be trusted in important matters of governance. Since few women were educated at all, they were not even considered.

The hierarchical model of governance is no longer appropriate in religious life; its assumptions and principles do not fit the situations and groups in religious life today

Second, the model assumed that most people were dangerous to the leader and that there had to be layers of insulation between the leader and the populace. The many levels of hierarchy (first in the army and later in other uses of the model) provided protection for the person at the top. The Mafia has used this element of the model to great advantage.

Third, the model assumed that there was a limited amount of power. Therefore, the leader class had to keep as much power for itself as it could. The fear was that if the power was diffused throughout the populace, the leaders would not retain enough to rule. The history of the Roman Empire is full of cases of groups revolting, seizing power, and being put down by the army.

Fourth, the model took for granted that the elite class would use its power for the good of all, not just for its own ends—an early example of trickle-down theory.

For organizations in which these assumptional bases are valid, the hierarchical form of governance may be appropriate still. But in some organizations these assumptions are not valid, and a different model is necessary.

The organic model has assumptions that parallel the above but are different. First, it assumes that people have sufficient knowledge to be entrusted with power over their own lives. The emphasis is on knowledge and understanding rather than on education. So even in groups with little education, if the people understand the matters important in their life and functioning, they can be involved in their own governance.

Second, the organic model assumes that most people have good will and are not dangerous to themselves or to others. They are part of a community and, as such, are concerned about the good of

> **For an organic model of governance to be effective, the power that resides in the whole needs to be diffused in a suitable way**

the community as well as their own good. From such people, a good leader has nothing to fear. Another part of this assumption is that leaders who are isolated from the group they lead are in danger of not leading well.

Third, the model assumes that power is limitless in the sense that there is more than enough to go around, and that sharing of power with more people means increasing the power to be exercised for the good of all.

Fourth, the model assumes that the good of the whole will be better served by more people being involved in governance in a variety of ways, and thus does not assume a trickling down from an elite. It further assumes that the people in the different parts of the organization have various gifts that are of use to the whole.

HIERARCHICAL MODEL: PRINCIPLES

Authority. A key principle in both models is that concerning the source of authority. In the hierarchical model, authority comes from the top, from above. The word hierarchy comes from two Greek words, *hieros* and *archos*, the first meaning temple and the second meaning rule; thus, hierarchy means "rule from the temple." In the Greek concept, the temple meant the gods, and all authority was seen as coming from the gods. The Romans converted the emperors into gods and used the same principle.

The word *authority* comes from the Latin root *auctor*, meaning creator. Thus, in a hierarchical model, those at the top create all things and send them down to those below. It is a top-down system that allows the leaders to make all decisions, set all

modes of law, and impose them on those "under" them. Theologically, this led to concepts such as "the voice of the superior is the voice of God," as well as to ideas about the divine right of rulers. So all authority resides in the leaders, and the greatest amount resides in the highest leader, who is empowered to create everything.

Responsibility. This word means that one is answerable as being the cause. In a governance model built on the hierarchical model, only the leaders are truly responsible, since only they are the creators. Thus, the principles of authority and responsibility go hand in hand, and they lead to the third principle.

Control of Power. Since the leaders are the creators and are responsible for what happens, it is essential in a hierarchical model that there be clear levels and clear delineations of control. In most hierarchical organizations this is done by putting in place "middle managers" who have no authority of their own but who exercise delegated authority and responsibility over a certain portion of the whole. Control becomes very important because any mistakes and problems will first be laid at the feet of those delegated, and eventually will be laid at the feet of those at the top. Thus, in most hierarchical systems, when things go wrong, the top leadership is attacked and sometimes sacrificed. To prevent such occurrences, many levels are put in place to protect the leaders. Often, in totalitarian hierarchies, the way to replace a faulty leader is to stage a coup d'etat.

Accountability. Since the leaders need to know what is going on at all times within the organization, both for their information and for their protection, the hierarchical model puts in place multiple ways for the members to be accountable to the leaders. Accountability to the leaders is the responsibility of members from all levels. It is rare, in this model, for the leaders to be really accountable to the members.

Subsidiarity. This principle was known at least as early as Thomas Aquinas, and probably much earlier. As organizations using the hierarchical model became larger, more complex, and more international, it became important to place some authority and responsibility lower in the hierarchical scale. This principle makes clear that what can be accomplished at a lower level is not to be reserved for the higher level. This is an adaptive principle that prevents the hierarchy from taking on an authoritarian style and becoming overly centralized.

Freedom as Gift. In a hierarchical model the members have certain freedoms that are given to them by the leadership. In the Greek and Roman system

the civic freedoms were limited to male property owners. The principle within a hierarchical model is that freedoms are gifts from the leaders and can be taken away; they are not rights.

ORGANIC MODEL: PRINCIPLES

Some of the principles of the organic model have the same names as the principles of the hierarchical model, but they are not the same.

Authority. In the organic model authority comes from the group, or the people. The people are the living reality, and they have the power to create. This is not to deny the important role of leaders, who are still needed. However, the power to create resides in the group, which chooses leaders to take on certain functions on the group's behalf. The early church used this model, as have many early societies in human history. We read in the *Acts of the Apostles* numerous examples of the gospel being proclaimed, and then the people being invited to identify leaders and call them forth to the service of the whole. In the organic model authority is closely tied to service.

Responsibility. Since authority in the organic model rests with all the people in a variety of ways, responsibility is considered to be shared by all. Each individual has a part in creating, and each must answer for that creation. One of the most important aspects of a working organic model is the delineation of when and how each person or group exercises authority, and hence of what each person's responsibility is. This principle also implies that since all are responsible, participation is not a right but an obligation, to be carried out in a way appropriate to one's age and skill. Certain responsibilities are delegated to leaders by the members of the group.

Diffusion of Power. For an organic model to be effective, the power that resides in the whole needs to be diffused in a suitable way. Thus, the members need to be empowered—that is, made aware of the power they can exercise. Likewise, leaders must be aware of the power that has been delegated to them to exercise. Both sides of the diffusion need to be in place for the model to work. The principle of diffusion of power recognizes that different people within the group will be delegated certain powers and will be held responsible for the exercise of those powers.

Often, when organic models are not working well, this is the place to look first for dysfunction. If leaders have not been empowered, or if members have lost all their power, the system will not work. In the first scenario there will be either chaos or paralysis; in the second case we are back to a hierarchical model disguised as an organic one.

Mutual Accountability. This flows naturally from the earlier principles. If power is diffused throughout the group, and in various ways, then each person and each entity is accountable for that share of the group power which is being exercised. Thus, leaders are accountable for their exercise or non-exercise of their delegated power and authority; members are accountable for their exercise of their reserved power and authority. All are responsible for the effects of their application of power. In this model those who refuse to participate without good reason are called to accountability as well.

Interdependence. This principle replaces that of subsidiarity in the hierarchical model. According to the principle of interdependence, all need to be aware of the effects that their decisions and actions have on all the other members of the group. The key concept here is that of wholeness. In an organic, living reality, wholeness is essential and is jeopardized when some parts are sacrificed to other parts. At times such sacrifices may be necessary, but they are made only with the full understanding and agreement of those affected. This principle allows for considerable diversity throughout the whole while protecting the integrity and inviolateness of the parts.

Freedom as Right. This principle recognizes that while the individual is part of a whole, responsible and accountable to the whole and its other parts, the individual possesses certain freedoms that cannot be taken away. The freedoms may be given up willingly for a greater good, but they cannot be summarily negated. Certain freedoms are seen as human rights; other freedoms are the result of membership in the group. Especially in organizations in which membership is self-chosen, the freedoms are used with a consciousness of the values and goals of the whole.

TRAPS IN GOVERNANCE

It becomes obvious as we look at both models and their principles that over the past years many congregations have fallen into some traps related to governance changes. One task I have often undertaken has been to help with the evaluation of governance models and structures. Usually, this has been after they have been in place for a number of years and are being rethought. Occasionally, it has been prior to the installation of a new form of governance. I have observed a number of traps, some of which can be avoided—and some of which are unavoidable, given the assumptions people make, or the stances people take, about their models. An understanding of these traps is important.

The Mixed-Model Trap. Too often I have found that the members of a system have clearly articulated

organic principles of government for themselves but have redesigned the system's structures in the hierarchical mode. Frequently, the model may look organic even though it is not. Perhaps new names and titles are assigned—president, coordinator, or animator (instead of superior); regions, areas, or clusters (instead of provinces). But when the authority and responsibility patterns are clearly hierarchical, the use of organic principles does not change that reality.

The Participation Trap. This is the most prevalent trap. Since the organic model identifies the group as the locus of power and gives authority and responsibility to all, three traps exist. One is that there is often a failure to be clear about what power has been delegated to the leaders. In groups whose leadership is paralyzed or under constant attack, this trap is the likely cause of the problem. To say that all have power is meaningless if power is not distributed in a useful and accountable way.

The second trap is related to the first, and also to the mode of decision making in most organic models. Usually, groups using organic models desire to make decisions by consensus. What needs to be made very clear is who is involved in which decisions. Not all need to be involved in all decisions all the time. The real trap, however, is the confusion between a decision made by consensus and a unanimous decision. To make a decision by consensus is to use a particular process that enables all to be supportive of the decision. There is no numerical figure for a consensus. To wait for unanimity on some issues is to never make a decision.

The third trap is to see participation as meaning that everyone participates all the time and in the same way. What is important is to find the appropriate kinds of participation and to recognize different kinds and quantities of participation.

The Freedom Trap. To assert that freedom is key and central to an organic model is not to move toward laissez-faire functioning. In some groups the word *responsible* comes before *freedom* in describing organic models. Certain human rights are inalienable, even in a religious congregation. Other rights are exercised, in any organization, in relation to others and their rights. The freedom of the organic model assumes that one has chosen to be a member of the group, wishes to nurture it and its members as well as oneself, and desires to further the mission and goals of the group. It is within this framework that one exercises personal and responsible freedom. An overemphasis on personal freedom often leads to disempowering the leaders to be anything but symbols.

CHOOSING FOR TODAY

The hierarchical model is basically a familial model based on the concept that some members are adults, or parents, and that others are children; that some are better educated than others and thus more able to take part in governance; that some are superior and some are inferior. The hierarchical model is elitist at its core. It seems to me, therefore, that it is no longer appropriate for religious congregations.

The organic model is an adult community model. That is, it is based on the idea that all the members are adults; that they all have gifts; that while the members' gifts differ, they are all of value to the whole; that all members are equals in the community; that the members have various degrees of education and types of skills. The organic model is political—for and about the *polis*, the people. It is also an ecclesial model, for and about the people of God. For this reason, though it is difficult to put in place and to practice, I believe that it is the appropriate model for religious congregations today.

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Helping the Sexually Abused

Ave Clark, O.P., M.P.S.

A beautiful sunset or a soft pink rose in a white porcelain vase awakens a sense of awe, wonder, and appreciation of beauty. One might take time to bathe in the warmth of the sun's comforting and all-embracing rays, to smell the rose. Life seems peace-filled, quiet, and totally safe.

But if you were sexually abused during your childhood—as I was—a sunset or a rose does not always hold quiet and peace; disturbing memories intrude. We are attacked by piercing, sharp blades of emotional pain caused by our having been abused. We hide from the sun or believe that it is shining for others; it seems only to heighten our sense of ugliness and our fears. The rose seems so fragile, too tender, overly sensitive to touch; the survivor holds the rose in secret, with deep respect and great, great care. Will we ever see the light? Will we always have to fight our ugly, shame-filled feelings? Will we always feel lost in a maze of memories, brutally confronted by the horrors that cause us deep anguish, terrible depressions, tortured nights of insomnia, fear, and terror?

I write to tell adult survivors of abuse to step forward into the light of compassion. Get therapy; tell a trusted, caring friend you were abused; find support, comfort, and safety *to save your life*.

Too often, survivors do not feel understood—or they feel alone and almost despairing. I have been there too often myself. Reach for the phone. Keep connected to your friends, your community, and other survivors. Don't let your anger destroy you. Don't let your fear (so out of control) control you. Don't let addictions eat you up. Don't let depression ruin your life. Don't let denial force you to pretend everything is okay when everything is falling apart.

I have read so many survivors' stories and heard so many survivors share their pain, fears, and suicidal feelings. I have resonated with them and accepted their support when I felt I could not put one foot in front of the other. I have deeply appreciated their patience, kindness, empathy, and understanding, and I have shared mine. I have listened to survivors sobbing over the phone to survive. I have heard their cries, whimpers, whispers, and screams. It costs to be there. How will we ever survive if we feel discarded, labeled, abandoned, forgotten, mocked, and ignored?

The terrible torture of having been abused is that part of your life always seems to have been an empty and worthless period of victimization. Care about yourself enough to say, "I need help. I want to embrace my pain." You cannot run away from it.

Take time to discover the inner light of hope, faith, and love that resides in your fragile spirit. You must come to see and believe that you are a rose worth being nurtured, sheltered, and cared for deeply. That is how we survive, valiantly and even heroically, to face each day, to get out and work and share our lives.

Don't deny others' pain or fear or put them down or label them. Don't increase others' pain or cause their scars to deepen. Take a pastoral, caring approach that says, "I will listen with a gentle heart and walk slowly with you on the road to recovering your self-worth."

This, I believe, is our call to discipleship—to befriend the wounded, the discarded, and the suffering; to walk gently on the road of Calvary and help each other carry our burdens with dignity and courage in a faithful community of companions.

TRAGEDY OF SUICIDE

One of my main reasons for writing this article is that a friend, a companion on the journey to surviving abuse, committed suicide last summer. It left me and others devastated, feeling guilty and deeply depressed. Some call suicide a selfish act, an angry act, a despairing act. It is a painful end to a life that can no longer handle the confusing chaos of a damaged spirit. It is a tragedy, not a healing solution.

Suicide does not bring peace. It brings only guilt, hostility, hurt, and questions—terrible, lonely questions. Few things are more devastating than the loss of someone we love by suicide.

You find yourself becoming another kind of survivor—a survivor of suicide. You fear that you can't handle this horrible broken dream. You hope to wake up and see your friend playfully kicking leaves in the street, or sipping a soft drink, or eating a favorite snack. You remember the rays of light that came between her pain and yours—a smile, a kind remark, a wisecrack, a serious discussion.

I wish I could turn the clock back to last summer, but I cannot. I must go forward despite my fears. I cry for my friend and wish her struggle had not killed her spirit. Some say she gave up. Who is to judge? One terrible, lonely, despairing moment took the sunlight out of a young life; a rose perished tragically. I stumble on, realizing how hard and cruel life can be. But I also realize that this terrible tragedy offers a lesson we shouldn't need to learn over and over again: mental illness can kill. Depression is a terrible, draining cross to bear.

In an item titled "Survivors of Suicide," the *Lifeline Institute Newsletter* (Winter 1991) reports, "[A] life ends by suicide on the average of every 17 minutes in this country . . . a youth [under 18] dies by his/her own hand every hour and 38 minutes in our country. But what about those left behind? the survivors of suicide? What are the effects of suicide on those who were close to the victim? It is estimated that each suicide affects at least six other people." Survivors of suicide must cope with this terrible, tragic chain effect of loss.

PROFESSIONAL HELP NEEDED

We who suffer the devastating effects of sexual abuse very often find ourselves combating suicidal feelings. We struggle to deal with our grief and wonder if we are brave enough. Don't be afraid to tell someone about your confusing, frightening thoughts of suicide. Talk to a trusted friend—but also get professional help.

Remember the goodness and kindness of friends who have taken their own lives. Remember their attempts to survive.

Church ministers must strive to keep incest, rape, abuse, and suicide from being seen as taboos or as isolated issues not affecting the community.

Listen to the whispers so we don't have to hear the screams. If you have been abused, don't keep this terrible secret to yourself. If you know someone who is suffering because of this shattering experience, encourage that person to find someone to share with and help him or her to get professional help.

Those of us who have lost someone to suicide need comforting words and other survivors of suicide with whom to walk a painful road we never thought we would travel.

In darkness, I have learned that with the great light called Faith we can believe and trust and struggle to live, to celebrate, and to share so that our secret scars and silent screams can be seen and heard with respect, compassion, and understanding. A sunset and a rose can be seen anew. A new day can dawn—a new beginning.

The Lifeline Institute's organization Survivors of Suicide (SOS) is based at 9108 Lakewood Drive, S.W., Tacoma, Washington 98499. For information on SOS or a meeting location in your area, call 1-800-422-2552.

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Testing Seminary and Religious Candidates for HIV Infection

George Sabol, O.F.M. Conv.

In the mid-1980s the world became aware of the devastation that can be caused by the AIDS virus (HIV). It wasn't long before AIDS was classified as a catastrophic illness. The cost of AIDS treatment for an individual patient can be as much as half a million dollars.

By now most people in the United States personally know someone who is HIV-positive or who has AIDS. Many have someone in their extended family who is suffering from the illness. Dioceses and religious communities are experiencing the same thing.

Around the mid-1980s certain dioceses and religious communities began a policy of mandatory testing for HIV in candidates to their formation programs. Most initiated the policy out of "common sense." Few felt they could afford the risk of accepting and caring for new members with this catastrophic illness.

Common sense aside, however, many feel uneasy about the policy. What does it say to the world at large about our Christian witness? No matter how you present such a policy, it smacks of discrimination and lack of compassion.

Few if any dioceses or religious communities would dare make the assertion that someone who tests positive for HIV cannot possibly have a vocation. But many of these groups have arrived at the position that as communities, they simply cannot afford the financial and emotional costs of accepting new members afflicted with the virus.

A few years ago I was a member of my province's formation commission when we were asked by our superiors to study the question of mandatory HIV testing in aspirants to our community and to come up with a policy proposal. At the time, considering the "common sense" argument, I thought this would be easy to do.

ETHICAL ISSUES EMERGE

When I entered religious life nearly thirty years ago, there were three basic requirements for acceptance into the formation program: (1) good character and practice of the faith (which could be attested to by a letter of recommendation from the pastor), (2) average intelligence (which could be verified by a transcript of grades), and (3) reasonably good health (which could be verified by a physician's report). These basic requirements have not changed over the years, and they do make sense. Average intelligence and reasonably good health are necessary for facing the rigors of a formation program that can span up to nine years if the candidate enters after completing high school.

However, as we explored the issue of a mandatory HIV-testing policy, many concerns surfaced that had not been apparent at the outset. Some involved serious ethical issues that must be taken into consideration before implementing such a policy. It took almost two full years of thoughtful reflection and debate before we came up with a

policy that, although not immune from criticism, at least attempts to be ethically sound.

EVALUATION CONSIDERATIONS

For the evaluation of the ethical soundness of any testing policy, I propose several prerequisites based on the ethical principles of respect for the person, right to privacy, confidentiality, justice, and responsibility.

Respect requires that each individual be granted the right to control his or her own destiny. This principle also includes respect for the person's right to privacy. When I applied for entrance into my community, I was required to undergo the Wasserman test for venereal disease (VD). I recall this as having been at the very least an embarrassing experience, if not an outright invasion of my privacy. However, the choice to apply to the formation program was mine, and I decided to go along with all of the requirements, including a battery of psychological tests.

I realize that my experience of embarrassment in taking the VD test in no way compares with the possible consequences of taking the HIV test. Although a positive result might have ended my process of application to the seminary, most venereal diseases known in the 1960s could be cured with a few injections of penicillin.

AIDS is a new reality in a new society. As far as we know at this time, a positive HIV test result means that the person most likely will develop the fatal disease AIDS. The news of a positive HIV test result can be devastating.

Many states now have a law requiring doctors to report HIV-positive results. This could cause serious social and financial (health insurance) consequences for the individual. How can we ethically ask a prospective candidate to take such risks? There is no easy answer. However, some actions can be taken to minimize the risks.

CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Before beginning to consider any type of policy, we must be honest with regard to the purpose of testing for HIV. Could it be a cover for an attitude of homophobia? In my community no prospective candidate is rejected solely on the basis of sexual orientation or even past history of sexual activity or drug use. We look at the person in the present, as responding to God's call with an abundance of his grace. What is important is that the individual comprehend the concept of celibacy and be willing and able to give it a try. The sole purpose of the HIV test is to ensure that the prospective candidate meets the requirement of reasonably good health.

Since the consequences of a positive HIV test can be devastating, it is ethically necessary to receive informed consent from the applicant. The vocation director, who usually handles the paperwork of the application process, must make sure that the aspirant understands the possible results and consequences of the HIV test.

Another major concern with regard to testing is the guarantee of confidentiality. Any disclosure of a positive test result could have disastrous consequences for an individual. Therefore, an important consideration is the number of persons to be informed of the test result. The vocation director, his or her secretary, the formation directors, the major superior, and his or her councilors could add up to over a dozen people. To minimize the risk of breach of confidentiality, it could be arranged that only the vocation director is informed of the test result. If an applicant's result is positive, the vocation director could merely inform the major superior that the individual did not complete the application process and is no longer considered an aspirant to the community.

RESPONSE TO TEST RESULT

What do we do when a prospective candidate tests positive? Do we say "Sorry, but you don't meet our health requirements" and show him to the door? Certainly, our responsibility with regard to required testing indicates that we must be willing to provide ongoing counseling and spiritual direction and able to inform the individual of available resources beyond our competence.

What if the test result is a false positive? To minimize this possibility, a second, more exacting test (Western Blot) can be administered. However, this test can cost from two hundred to three hundred dollars. Should the prospective candidate be burdened with this expense in addition to his or her new anxieties?

What if the test result is a false negative? In this scenario, the individual is accepted into the formation program of the community and becomes our responsibility—or is that not the case?

At this point I feel it is important to mention that each diocese and religious community should have a more comprehensive policy for taking care of members who test positive for HIV. What if an accepted candidate later tests positive? Or a novice? Or someone in simple vows? Each community must examine its own conscience in the light of the gospels and the example of Jesus Christ. Once we accept someone into the community, it is impossible to justify further HIV testing for promotion to succeeding stages. Such a policy could easily get out of hand and end up being nothing more than a "witch hunt."

AIDS TOUCHES ALL

Good common sense does not necessarily include good Christian sense; however, they need not be

mutually exclusive. All of us today need to be better informed about HIV and AIDS, and certainly we must pray that this epidemic will soon end with the development of more effective treatment and a vaccine.

Until that time arrives, we have to deal with reality as best we can. Many of us use common sense to avoid assuming a potentially devastating drain on our emotional and financial resources.

But this is not the end of the story. AIDS is real, and in one way or another it touches us all, whether in family, in community, or in ministry. If we do not recognize and proclaim the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ in the midst of all of this, then we have truly failed, despite our common sense.

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Sibling Relationship Affects Drug Abuse

Older brothers or sisters play a major role in whether young people engage in drug use, according to research conducted by Judith S. Brook, a professor of psychiatry at the Medical College of New York. The influence of older siblings is powerful, she says. "The effects of a sibling are equal to or greater than [those of] peers."

Brook recommends that "if you have one child [who's] at risk [for using drugs], you might want to look at the other child['s behavior] to see what kind of an impact it's having." She finds that "a good relationship beween the siblings . . . appears to lead to less drug use," as well as less emotional trouble in general.

Described recently in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry,* Brook's study showed that older brothers with "protective traits" act as a buffer against risk factors for drug use in younger ones. A close bond between brothers, "in which there is mutual affection, admiration and acceptance, and little competitiveness," was found to have a similar effect.

Family affairs columnist Mary Jo Kochakian, writing in the *Hartford Courant,* reports that "a relationship in which brothers share disdain for drugs and deviancy, and in which they value success, is most protective for younger siblings." Research shows that even if a younger brother has close friends who are taking drugs, he is not likely to use them if his older brother does not. But the reverse is true when an older brother uses drugs, rejects middle-class values, and drops out of school or gets in trouble with the law. In such a case, peer behavior is likely to strongly reinforce the influence of the older sibling.

Brook says that parents can often offset the potentially harmful influence of a drug-taking older child by building up the younger one's personality or by strengthening their own relationship with him or her. Her study shows that "a strong parent-child bond has been found to protect against drug use." She adds that "if you see a pattern of risk early, you can get help when it's likely to be most effective."

Researchers have found that childhood aggression is a very powerful predictor of drug use ten to fifteen years later. Brook recommends, "If you have a kid who's aggressive and you intervene early to deal with that aggression, then that's going to lead to less drug use and problems down the road." In view of the importance of a strong sibling bond, she advises parents to attempt to do something "very difficult"— that is, build up the relationship. "Increase the warmth," Brook advises, "and try to decrease the competitive, jealous aspects."

Prayer at Midlife

Eileen T. McGovern, S.S.J., M.A.

As the person in midlife experiences conversion, a deep longing to experience the God Who Loves arises. Some writers compare the pain of this experience to the pain of a woman in labor. She, as John reminds us (16:21–22), experiences much pain, but when her child is born, she no longer remembers the pain in her joy about the new life. The midlife person is giving birth to a new person—an authentic, deeply human person. In Jungian terms, the midlife person is achieving individuation. Abraham Maslow speaks of self-actualization.

In *Mid-Life: Psychological and Spiritual Perspectives*, Jean Brennan and Ann Brewi state emphatically the Jungian thesis that the crisis of midlife is a crisis of faith. In *Chaos or Creation: Spirituality in Mid-Life*, L. Patrick Carroll and Katherine Dykeman see this same crisis underlying the symptoms of midlife. They quote Meister Eckhart, who calls this midlife birthing a breakthrough and speaks of three births: "a birth of our true self in terms of our consciousness of our oneness with God, God's birth of the Son in us, and our birth as sons and daughters of God."

The midlife person can find no peace until he or she surrenders in faith. Yet this can seem to be an experience of loss of faith because of disillusionment with self, church, and God. Some midlife persons can no longer pray as they did previously. Participation in group prayer, in liturgy, seems boring. God is no longer present; prayer is no longer joyous, peace-filled, or satisfying. There is a temptation to stop praying, to skip public worship.

Carroll and Dykeman remind us that our midlife journey into self is a journey into God. Our journey is affected by our experience. Since the midlife pray-er is in upheaval, prayer will be darkness. It can assume the form of the Dark Night of John of the Cross or of Merton's "inner experience" or of the cloud of unknowing. As we face the darkness, both in ourselves and in our prayer, we begin meeting the Darkness Who Is God. In meeting God we meet our true selves.

God invites us to journey to him in this darkness, not because he is capricious but because he knows that it is only in letting go and walking in faith within the darkness that we can meet him and know him through his gift of Love. But because we need to be in control, we are constantly fighting God. We continue to try to hold on to the past, to cling to the prayer of the past. We refuse to allow God to be God. Instead, we try to be God.

ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL

Meister Eckhart speaks of three methods that we use to control God. We seek to name him. In other words, we attempt to limit him. God is mystery and thus beyond our ability to limit. Second, we attempt to know him intellectually. However, just

as we begin to recognize him, God changes. God is always in front of us. Just as we begin to believe that we know him, God moves out of sight. Like Moses, we see only his back, or like Elijah, we hear only the whisper of a slight breeze. Our knowledge of God can never be other than that of the heart. Third, we feel we have had enough of God, that we are bored with him and must move on.

Each of these attempts at controlling God is futile, but each is understandable in the person who is experiencing the crisis of midlife, with its confusion and loss of control. Many writers compare the confusion of the midlife pray-er to the third mansion of Saint Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*. This is especially true for those people who through their adult years have striven for a well-ordered and established prayer life. These people have difficulty understanding the abrupt changes they are experiencing. Many have difficulty understanding what God is doing in them. Some may wonder where God is in the darkness that envelops them.

John of the Cross explains the darkness through the metaphors of twilight, midnight, and dawn. Twilight is a dry period—a time of dissatisfaction with anything that is spiritual—a time of confusion and, possibly, guilt. Midnight is a time of brokeness and despair. It is a time when the pray-er is imbued with a total sense of failure—even when others see the pray-er as successful, good, even holy. God is absent—totally absent—and the pray-er is alienated from self, from others, and from the Other Who Is God. In essence, God has taken over. He is in possession of the pray-er, removing that which is not of him. The pray-er must rely on faith, which is rooted totally and deeply in God. Ruth Burrows, in *Guidelines for Mystical Prayer*, tells us that this faith

> involves a total dying to self. St. Paul points this out. By faith we "die." It means renouncing myself as my own base, my own centre, my own end. It means so casting myself on another, so making that other my raison d'etre that it is in truth, a death to the ego. The whole of the spiritual journey can be seen in terms of trust, growing in trust until one has lost oneself in God.

Burrows continues her thoughts on this deep faith, which we cannot develop by ourselves because we cannot stand aside to look at it:

> The second sign is an awareness of a disinclination to fix the imagination or some faculty on particular objects, exterior or interior.

John of the Cross notes that the imagination will wander freely, even in deep recollection, and stresses the pray-er's awareness of a deep disinclination to meditate. He notes that the most certain sign is that "the person likes to remain alone in loving awareness of God, without particular con-

Our knowledge of God can never be other than that of the heart

siderations, in interior peace, quiet, and repose . . . he prefers to remain only in general loving awareness and knowledge."

In their commentary on the three signs of John of the Cross, Carroll and Dykeman note that not only do things of God give us no pleasure; neither does anything else. Every level and facet of life is dull, boring. Nothing is of interest. There is a sense of wasting time in prayer. It seems as if God views one's every effort as a waste. No one can convince the pray-er otherwise.

For the pray-er, midlife is a time when one feels God's absence acutely. This experience is, in reality, an experience of God's overwhelming presence in the soul. However, the pray-er, who has no sensible appreciation of God's presence, often neglects prayer, feeling forgotten by God or feeling so evil, so broken, that God has given up on him or her. This can be an embarrassing experience for the ministering person, who feels like a hypocrite when speaking to another of God and his gifts.

SOME PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Carroll and Dykeman make some suggestions for the pray-er caught in this experience. They include striving to lessen the preoccupation with doing, instead allowing events to happen; devoting less attention to making decisions, instead allowing desires to come into consciousness; doing less reasoning and more intuiting; putting less focus on inabilities and paying more attention to the positive action of God in one's life; trying to be less anxious about progress in prayer or in any other personal area and to rely more on God; being less concerned about the quality of prayer and coming to the deeper realization that prayer is found in

concern for others; doing less searching for God and becoming more aware of God seeking us.

The invitation to the midlife pray-er is an invitation to let go and let God. It is an invitation to float, to set aside anxiety and allow oneself to trust. God invites the midlife pray-er to trust, to surrender himself or herself to him, and to allow him to penetrate every moment of the day.

As the pray-er begins to believe once again in self and opens his or her heart to the Other, the whole person can become involved in communication with the Other—a communication that can begin only after one no longer needs to control. When one has surrendered control, new ways can be found to overcome fear and mistrust. A new concern for others develops as the pray-er is gifted with compassion. Compassion, a true expression of the God within, leads the pray-er to a deeper love for self and others. This new love is accepting of differences; it is an expression of the Love that has touched and softened the stony heart of the midlife pray-er, transforming it into a heart that is warm and alive for others. This moment brings the pray-er full circle, allowing him or her to respond in a new way to the Other Who Is God. In *Man Becoming: God in Secular Experience*, Gregory Baum attempts to express this experience in language that is simple yet profound. He speaks of the experience of prayer that comes only with struggle and pain. This prayer is God's gift to the pray-er who has emptied himself or herself of all that is not essential.

COMPARABLE TO A DAWN

We are not even aware of this faith until God begins to shift in us. Burrows maintains that only one in whom God has worked profoundly will notice this shift. Dawn is the time when hope is reborn, when one begins to know intuitively that the desert is the place to be. It may not be possible to articulate more about this knowledge that rises from the depths of the heart. Burrows tells us that "something unspeakably wonderful is happening in the depths of self and the self cannot see it. No light shines on it. There are effects following from this happening and these are consciously experienced, but not the happening itself."

Carroll and Dykeman see the dawn experience as a movement into Saint Teresa's fourth mansion, where the psyche experiences peace and the pray-er moves into the prayer of quiet. Teresa herself tells us that this is when "the Lord seems to me to begin to show us that He is hearing our petition." And she emphasizes that "this is a supernatural state, and however hard we try, we cannot reach for it ourselves."

John of the Cross, in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, gives us signs for which the pray-er and the director may look. These signs are indications of God's presence and an invitation to a simple, quiet prayer called "dark contemplation." John tells us that "the first is the realization that one cannot make discursive meditation nor receive satisfaction from it as before. Dryness is now the outcome."

John does not favor the abandonment of discursive meditation until the time when this dryness is very obvious. He notes that

to pray is to be in touch with oneself in a new way: to listen to the melody, not made by ourselves, that sounds at the core of our being and, from beyond the sickness that deafens us, summons us to be alive. Since God is redemptively present in man's coming to be, prayer is a way of holding or possessing oneself. This kind of prayer is not a moving away from oneself or a reaching out for another, but rather a being in communion with oneself in and through the gift dimension that is constitutive of one's being.

A GIFT TO SEEKERS

Baum speaks of prayer as a gift given freely to each person who seeks it. Prayer is given into the open hands and heart of the pray-er, that he or she may receive it freely and freely gift others with its fruits.

In a sense, the new dimension of prayer that is developing deep within the pray-er is very different from the prayer experience of earlier years. No longer is there a concern to do something. The pray-er brings himself or herself to God. In God's presence the pray-er allows the senses to quiet themselves. This enables the pray-er's whole being to focus on the Other, opening the self to the God Who Is Friend and Lover, allowing God to draw the pray-er to him—to woo the pray-er, as it were. As the prayer deepens, it becomes an experience of love—an experience of falling in love with the Lover who has desired the pray-er through all eternity. Prayer becomes the time of deepest intimacy, the moment in which love is developed, deepened, and shared. It is a time of giving and receiving, a moment in which trust develops and grows. This prayer is a moment among many for the pray-er, for the midlife pray-er experiences the dryness of the desert or the darkness of the night, momentarily penetrated by tiny flashes of God. But these brief flashes, these minute intimacies continue to draw the pray-er ever deeper into the darkness where he or she meets the Other Who Is God. In "The Dry Salvages," T. S. Eliot helps us to understand these moments of melody, these fleeting God-moments that draw us ever onward: "Music heard so deeply/That it is not heard at all,/but you are the music/while the music lasts."

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Because the relationship between God and pray-er is such a sensitive issue for the pray-er, it is

necessary to look at some of the ways in which he or she can receive the help needed to facilitate growth. Some midlife pray-ers find the confusions and struggles of prayer so painful that they need to talk with others who have made the journey. They seek out persons to whom they can speak of their struggle and pain, of their successes and failures. Other midlife pray-ers who either cannot find such persons or do not wish to share their inner journey with others seek a source book that will help them clarify their internal struggle. Still others go into therapy.

Many pray-ers find that a spiritual director can provide the support and help they need in order to recognize the obstacles that might be holding them back from a fuller life. The director can help the pray-er develop positive skills that will further his or her development. The director reflects back the pray-er's experience, allowing him or her to view it from a new perspective, to relive the feelings, and so to enter more deeply into the experience. The skillful director facilitates the pray-er's dealings with his or her shadow, thus enabling the pray-er to view reality with a new perspective as the pray-er comes to own his or her self. The director can also begin the shaping process of formation, allowing the faith of the pray-er to establish itself. This enables transformation to occur as the pray-er reworks the framework of meaning in his or her life. No matter which choices the pray-er makes, the outcome is a deepening of prayer, a movement to contemplation.

AN INWARD JOURNEY

Contemplation is the prayer of the midlife person. The midlife pray-er pays close attention to what occurs within, revealing and unveiling the truth of the self. This leads to a deep humility as God shows the pray-er not only his boundless love for him or her but also the pray-er's true self—a self that he or she has hidden for many years but that has always been known to God. This inner view is combined with an outer view as the pray-er contemplates the world through God's eyes and sees the reality of both good and evil. The pray-er begins to understand that the gifts that God is pouring on him or her are not for the self; they are to be used in the service of others, for the Kingdom. Gerard Manley Hopkins had this experience in mind when he wrote of perceiving the "inscape" rather than the "landscape." For Hopkins, the inscape is the convergence of our experience in God, a unity of all in the Other. As the pray-er allows God to be God in his or her prayer, he or she begins a journey into

the center, a movement into an ever-deepening relationship with God. This journey is not without pain, but it will bring the pray-er to a deeper sense of the Love that invites and impels him or her inward. In *The Inner Eye of Love*, William Johnston describes this journey:

> In the mystical life one passes from one layer to the next in an inner or downward journey to the core of the personality where dwells the Great Mystery called God—God who cannot be known directly, cannot be seen and Who dwells in thick darkness. This is the never ending journey which is recognizable in the mysticism of all the great religions. It is a journey towards union because the consciousness gradually expands and integrates data from the so-called unconscious while the whole personality is absorbed into the great mystery of God.

This journey can be stormy, unsettling, overwhelming, and frightening as the pray-er attempts to cling to the known self. Yet he or she chooses to journey inward, to meet the conflict, and to seek the God Who Dwells Within.

The rebirth of the pray-er is a life-and-death struggle; it is accomplished only through the death of the old self. Courage is needed; so too is patience. The pray-er will grieve as the struggle continues, but even while mourning that which is no more, the pray-er will begin to accept the new life to which Jesus invites him or her. The pray-er will begin to rejoice in his or her newfound relationship with the God who has become Brother, Lover, Friend.

RECOMMENDED READING

Brewi, J., and A. Brennan. *Mid-Life: Psychological and Spiritual Perspectives*. New York, New York: Crossroad, 1982.
Burrows, R. *Guidelines for Mystical Prayer*. Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1976.
Carroll, L., and K. Dykeman. *Chaos or Creation: Spirituality in Mid-Life*. New York, New York: Paulist Press, 1986.
Studzinski, R. *Spiritual Direction and Midlife Development*. Chicago, Illinois: Loyola University Press, 1985.
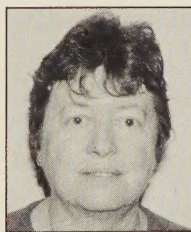
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BOOK REVIEW

Changing Life Patterns: Adult Development in Spiritual Direction, by Elizabeth Liebert, S.N.J.M. Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1992. 203 pp.$13.95.

Studies on adult development have proliferated in the last fifteen years. Daniel Levinson launched the movement with the publication of his influential *Seasons of a Man's Life* (1978). Shortly thereafter, women such as Anita Spencer, author of *Seasons* (1982), challenged some of Levinson's assumptions by suggesting significant differences in the life span of women.

Contemporaneously with Levinson, another Harvard researcher, Lawrence Kohlberg, in *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (1981) and in many earlier publications, indicated that people's ability to make moral decisions develops through a succession of six possible stages, each one more sophisticated than the one preceding it. Women such as Carol Gilligan, author of *In a Different Voice* (1982), countered that Kohlberg's research did not take into account unique aspects of women's experience—especially their ability to "hold relationships" while making choices. At the same time James Fowler wrote in *Stages of Faith* (1981) that people's ability to invest trust in people and meaning beyond themselves evolves through a series of six stages. Fowler's stages bore a striking similarity to those delineated by Kohlberg.

All these developmentalists acknowledged Carl Jung, Jean Piaget, and Erik Erikson as their forebears. Following Erikson, they agreed that people move from one developmental stage to another by means of crises. These are painful but privileged moments in which accustomed patterns of interaction unravel, and they may lead to developmental breakthroughs. Typically, people in crisis face a dilemma of cognitive, psychosocial, moral, or religious dimensions. As a result they may go through a painful conversion experience that allows them to let go of cherished outlooks in order to embrace new ones.

In addition, two second-generation Piagetists, Jane Loevinger (*Ego Development*, 1976) and Robert Kegan (*The Evolving Self*, 1982), mapped out a more integrated, more complex, and better-balanced theory of human ego development and the self as it moves through transitions over time.

In *Changing Life Patterns*, a compact, well-written volume, Elizabeth Liebert not only lays out the complex structural development of adults but also uses four case histories to illustrate the spiritual growth dimensions at each stage. By her mastery of the adult development tradition and her sympathetic presentation of the whole person, with acknowledgment of female and male differences, she avoids the storms of gender bias and focuses on the person's growing relationship with God and others. Liebert is clear, precise, and perceptive. Her analysis is pervaded by the kind of wisdom that characterizes an experienced spiritual director who is empathetic with directees and has expertise in developmental psychology.

She presents her own structure for adult spiritual development, relying primarily on the work of Loevinger and Kegan. Loevinger is particularly suitable for Liebert's purpose of exploring issues in spiritual guidance, since Loevinger "understands humans to be active, interacting, partially free to determine their destiny, and changing in the direction of an end or goal." Loevinger also understands ego not as a part of the mind but as the process of meaning-making.

Liebert also provides a thoughtful, suggestive chapter on the application of developmental theory in a communal parish setting. This chapter could well be the basis for another book if she were to add material on complementary organizational and group process theory.

After eight chapters of cogent analysis, Liebert, in the book's final chapter, suggests a grounding metaphor of "connected learning" as an image of spiritual guidance. That image does not achieve its purpose, however. It seems more constructed than emergent, more rational than evocative. Liebert's instincts are certainly accurate, though; such a metaphor would allow a person to suspend all those critical, developmental categories and reenter, à la Paul Ricoeur's "second naiveté," a mythic, originating sphere in which it is possible to encounter more freely the mystery of the numinous Other.

The charts that Liebert provides as appendixes on each of the major theories are themselves worth the price of the book. This study should be in the hands of every spiritual director, and it would also make an excellent companion for a college course in human/spiritual development. In fact, this reviewer plans to adopt it as a text for a graduate course in psychospiritual development.

—**Patrick J. Howell, S.J.**

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